Ballet TODAY

JUNE, 1959

DIA NERINA in GISELLE

Price 2/-

ROYAL PERFORMANCE

The Shah of Persia, H.M. The Queen and other members of the Royal Family attended a Gala Performance of Ballet during The Shah's state visit to Britain. Seen in our picture (left to right): The Shah, the Foreign Secretary Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, and H.M. The Queen in the foyer of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

The Royal Box, which was specially constructed for The Shah's visit, was decorated by Mr. Dennis Lennon, M.C., A.R.I.B.A., to represent a canopied Persian Pavilion. The front of the tiers was hung with red and orange tulle and garlanded with white carnations and lilac. Apple trees in full bloom stood in the foyer and on the grand staircase. For the occasion the Crush Bar was hung with emerald green taffeta with stripes of fringed white satin, and decorated with real orange trees bearing fruit.

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EDITOR
ESTELLE HERF

Ballet TODAY

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EDITOR'S LOG

ROYAL PERFORMANCE

There wasn't time to buy a tiara. (I only had twenty-four hours notice that a seat had been issued to me for the performance at the Royal Opera House in honour of His Imperial Majesty The Shahanshah of Iran.) But every other woman in the audience had, the rest had taken them out of the family strongroom or bank.

Parking arrangements were excellent and even taxis had been issued with the important-looking labels bearing a large FS we all had to affix to our windscreens. Ticket holders had to be in their seats by 8.45. The Queen was not due to arrive until 9.15 p.m. and as time went on the excited chatter rose to a crescendo. Even the magnificent Beefeaters lining the aisles gossiped with the programme sellers, who were doing a brisk trade with the orange leaf-shaped programmes at 7s. 6d. a time.

Suddenly the curtains parted to reveal ten royal trumpeters holding their instruments at half-mast. There was not a sound in the great theatre. They placed their trumpets to their lips for what seemed like ages before they sounded the fanfare, and we turned to face the Royal Box.

There had been plenty of time to admire the decor of the Royal Box before the entry of the Queen. Draped in pink and scarlet to represent a Persian Pavilion, surmounted by a crimson peacock with two blue peacocks either side, it had seemed very magnificent, but once the Royal party entered everything else paled into insignificance. No decor, however grand, could compete with the magnificent diamonds worn by the Queen. She stood there scintillating as her own jewels caught and reflected the lights, and the jewellery and decorations of the other distinguished guests in the Royal Box flashed and sparkled in a brilliant background. "I had no idea the British had so many diamonds left," said a woman in the audience. "Oh, yes," replied her escort, "they have oodles of them really."

Despite the pomp and magnificence it seemed a real family party surrounding the handsome Shah. There was the Queen Mother, Prince Philip, Princess Margaret, The Duchess of Kent, the Duchess of Gloucester, Princess Alexandra, as well as the Prime Minister, the Ambassadors and their ladies.

The intention was obviously to make it as gay an evening as possible, with no hint of troubles, not even on stage. We saw Act III of *Coppelia*, by which time, of course, Swanilda and Franz have ironed out their differences, and are deliriously happy in their marriage celebrations. Anya Linden and David Blair made a handsome couple in this. Frederick Ashton's *Les Rendezvous* followed with the brilliant Nerina stopping the show, and the programme ended with the second act of *Cinderella*, by which time, of course, the Ugly Sisters (Margaret Hill and Moyra Fraser) had been properly put in their places, and we see them only as figures of fun no longer able to behave as petty tyrants towards Cinderella (Svetlana Beriosova) because her Prince (Michael Somes) had found her and it was obvious that they would be living happily ever after.

During one of the intervals I noticed a foreign-looking gentleman handing out a four-page leaflet containing a colour-picture of the Shah, and after shyly proffering one or two he gave up. The history of the Shah printed on the last page seemed mighty like propaganda to me. Perhaps the distributor lost his nerve after one or two well-bred stares, or it could be that he felt his mission was unnecessary after he had heard the tremendous reception given His Imperial Majesty inside and outside the theatre.

SWAN LAKE FILMED

Agnes de Mille tells an amusing story in her new book "And Promenade Home" of an uneasy night spent at the ballet with her husband, who was *not* a balletomane, and

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Nadia Nerina as Giselle a new-type photo-drawing by Edwin Smith.

Our next issue will be published on 2nd July, 1959.

EDITOR'S LOG

(continued)

Maia Plisetskaya in *Swan Lake*, the first full-length ballet ever to be filmed in the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow. A battery of cameras shot the whole of the ballet in colour during an actual performance.

who remained unimpressed. To prove his point her husband asked the opinion of a complete stranger in the audience, a military gentleman, who replied "balderdash." A fine, upstanding answer, one could apply it only too frequently without being unduly harsh or unmindful of the hard work and high hopes which go into every production. But these are not enough, and after a surfeit of uninteresting ballet boredom sets in.

I returned in this mood from a short holiday abroad this month. Having seen the worst *Swan Lake* of my life I felt I would do well to leave this ballet alone for a while, but it was not to be, for I found an invitation awaiting me for the preview of the Soviet colour film of *Swan Lake*, with Maia Plisetskaya and Nikolai Fadeyechev in the principal roles. The film runs for 81 minutes, all of them entrancing. The only cause for complaint was that the cameras flash over to the audience in the middle of a beautiful dance sequence and one feels cheated. But this is not as unpardonable as it sounds because the background to the film is an evening at the Bolshoi Theatre. You really feel that you are attending a performance as the audience files into the auditorium, the lights dim, the conductor raises his baton and the curtains part. The spoken commentary will also distract regular balletgoers, but I do not think it is a mistake to put this in, for here is a film which everyone should see, and knowing the story will help a non-balletic audience to appreciate it.

BUTLIN DANCING FESTIVAL

Claimed to be the largest dancing festival in the world, the ninth annual Festival at Filey promises to be as lavish as ever this year with over 10,000 dancers taking part. The Festival caters for varied Senior and Junior events and lasts for two weeks from 22nd August to 5th September.

For the Juniors this will be their sixth Annual Festival and there are ten modern events, 13 old-time and sections for ballet, tap and stage events. Entries in the senior section close on 12th August and in the Junior Secton on 1st August. Enquiries should be sent to the Organising Secretary, Butlin's Dancing Festival, 38, Trippet Lane, Sheffield.

NEWS HERE AND THERE

Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes danced *Swan Lake* with the Polish National Ballet in Warsaw on 19th and 22nd May. This guest-artist engagement was arranged by the British Council in negotiation with the Polish Ministry of Culture, who are paying all expenses. Fonteyn and Somes return to London on 24th May.

Alicia Markova will present popular ballet music and Robert Irwin popular opera, in the Light Music Festival of 1959 at the Royal Festival Hall, 7.30 p.m., 13th June with the B.B.C. Concert Orchestra, conducted by Vilem Tausky. The programme will include Constant Lambert's "Rio Grande" and the first performance of Andrzej Panufnik's "Polish Dance Suite."

When the present London ballet season ends Gary Burne and Merle Park, both natives of Southern Rhodesia, will be spending their leave from the Royal Ballet in their own country. Three of the five weeks will be taken up with dancing engagements in Bulawayo, Salisbury and Umtali.

Alexis Rassine, Marina Svetlova and Ram Gopal have formed the "Trio de Ballet" and commenced touring at the end of May (details in our *Progammes for the Month* on page 26). When their present tour ends they will commence a tour of Switzerland, return to Dublin for one week, and then commence another tour of Scandinavia.

Eduardo and a section of his Spanish Dance Company are to appear in a forthcoming B.B.C. Television "World Theatre Series." The production is Garcia Lorca's *Blood Wedding*. Eduardo is arranging all the dances, castanet and palmas work for the production which will be seen on June 2nd. The Company then make a short concert recital tour of Europe which opens at Brussels. On their return to England they begin another tour which will open with a two week season in Manchester.

It is rumoured that Luisillo will be opening in London during October.

Although I have not yet received the information from official sources, I hear that the Nervi Festival is to be cancelled this year.

Pilar Lopez whose Ballet Español opened a three weeks' season at the Princes on 11th May is presenting in London for the first time seventeen-year-old Eduardo Serrano, a flamenco dancer from Madrid. Peter Daubeny who is presenting the show thinks this young dancer will prove to be a second Antonio, and he certainly has made a very favourable impression both in London and Paris. Although London audiences are subjected to much criticism from time to time, they are not slow in expressing their admiration, if they like what they see. I do wish however that Spanish dancers would not make a habit of following or running concurrently with their shows. In the last few weeks we have had Carmen Amaya, Susana and José, and now Pilar Lopez.

Kenneth Macmillan is the choreographer for the new John Osborne musical comedy "The World of Paul Slickey" which opened at the Palace Theatre London on 5th May. John Osborne directed the musical himself and also wrote the lyrics. The score is by Christopher Whelen, with sets designed by Sir Hugh Casson, and costumes by artist Jocelyn Richards who worked with John Osborne on the costumes for the film "Look Back in Anger." "The World of Paul Slickey" is a satirical tilt at newspaper gossip columnists and the world in which they move. Dennis Lotis the pop singer breaks new ground in the leading role of Jack Oakham, the writer of the "Paul Slickey" column. The musical is presented by Leon Hepner, Cedric Levitt, Gilda Dahlberg and David Pelham.

THE THINGS THEY ASK

An enthusiastic but not very accurate balletomane argued with his fellow workers that Nijinsky in his day had jumped higher than any athlete. To back his assertion he betted one shilling *per foot jumped*. They wrote to me to settle the argument and finally the boastful one was, so they tell me, twenty-five shillings out of pocket.

DAME NINETTE IN MOSCOW

BY OLEG KERENSKY

Dame Ninette De Valois is welcomed to the Soviet Union by another famous personality in ballet—Mme. Yelena Bocharnikova, Director of the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet School. This was an exchange visit, for Mme. Bocharnikova was in London last year

DAME NINETTE DE VALOIS returned to London in the middle of April after spending a month in the Soviet Union, mostly studying teaching methods at the Bolshoi School but also visiting Leningrad and, of course, seeing a large number of ballets. On her return she gave a fascinating and instructive account of her experiences to members of the Royal Ballet and a few fortunate critics, assembled in the Green Room at Covent Garden. Understandably, Dame Ninette did not want all her frank and informal comments to be published, but nevertheless a great deal of what she said was "on the record."

Two main impressions were left by her talk:—the enormous contrasts in technique, style and taste between London and Moscow, and the contrasts between Moscow and Leningrad which, she said, made the ballet school in the latter city seem almost like White Lodge!

Moscow's different approach is evident from the very beginning, in the small children's classes. There is less strict discipline and, even in the first two or three years, a lot of emphasis on the arms, back and shoulders. Dame Ninette intends to incorporate a certain number of the exercises she saw in Moscow in the Royal Ballet's classes.

There was little terre à terre work, and Dame Ninette said she rarely if ever saw a series of fouettés executed in Moscow. Movements tended to be slower, larger and more flowing than here, with lots of the spectacular lifts and aerial acrobatics which have become hallmarks of Soviet ballet. Because of the change in the dancers' style a great deal of Petipa's classical choreography is radically altered.

In Leningrad, on the other hand, there is more emphasis on footwork in the school, which develops a more complex but less obviously spectacular technique. Dame Ninette pointed out that there is a noticeable physical difference between the majority of the dancers in the two cities, those in Leningrad are more "western" in appearance.

Differences in aesthetic convention between Moscow and London were equally apparent. Dame Ninette doubted whether London audiences would be happy for long with Moscow's more heavily-built and muscular male dancers. She found some of the Bolshoi's more dangerous-looking acrobatic pas de deux disturbing, and could not understand why highly-trained classical dancers should be permitted to take such risks. At the same time, lyrical pas de deux by some younger choreographers which she praised were regarded by Soviet experts as "erotic."

Dame Ninette's favourite among the ballets she saw in Moscow was *Joan of Arc* at the Stanislavsky Theatre. She found this wonderfully moving, on the scale of *Romeo and Juliet*, but "more modern and with more complex choreography." She admitted to being particularly impressed because she herself had once toyed with the idea of a ballet on this theme, but discarded it as impractical.

Dancers she particularly admired were Plisetskaya, who reminded her of Pavlova, and a young Leningrad ballerina called Petrova.

Dame Ninette caused astonishment and amusement when she explained that the Soviet Union does not have ballet critics, at least in our sense. Soviet experts cannot understand the point of journalists with no special ballet training writing about the dance; the practice there is for dancers and choreographers to write critical reports on one another's work!

Dame Ninette came back to London convinced that both the Soviet and the Western ballet schools have a great deal to learn from each other. Each has its own national idiom, and it would be foolish to attempt indiscriminate imitation. But Soviet teachers and choreographers are apparently eager to understand the tradition of the Royal Ballet, one of the younger choreographers talked excitedly about Kenneth Macmillan. And Dame Ninette evidently feels that she has acquired some valuable fundamental principles for English dancers as a result of her trip.

LONDON REVIEWS

by FERNAU HALL

CARMEN AMAYA AT THE WESTMINSTER THEATRE

Carmen Amaya's season at the Westminster Theatre was her third in London, the others being in 1948 and 1952. Escudero was the first Spanish gypsy to win world fame, but she was the first to form and maintain in being a large, internationally touring company. What gives her company its special flavour is the fact that in it gypsies—who are the traditional exponents of Flamenco dancing, having preserved and developed it for many centuries—have the premier position. As one might expect, the Flamenco scenes showed the company at its best, and it was at its worst in *baile clásico español*, the hybrid of ballet and Spanish folk-dances which developed in Spain in the 18th century. The dancers in the company performing these dances were far from exciting to look at: their legs in particular lacked the long clean lines one expects in dancers, and their feet pointed with difficulty. Moreover Carmen Amaya's choreography showed little feeling for the style.

Things were very different when the gypsies took the stage for a Cuadro Flamenco: the men were lean and eagle-eyed, with tremendous arrogance in their poses, and the girls had that indescribable gypsy look which is inward-turned and yet boldly projected to the public. Merely to hear the *palmadas* (hand-clapping in counter-rhythms) was a delight, and then each one of the artists showed a snatch of dancing which had all the exuberance, spontaneity, individuality and wit characteristic of gypsy dancing at its best. The programme was set out in such a way that it was impossible to work out the names of the artists, but one male dancer with a half-Chinese face showed particular invention in his grotesque foot-work in the style of a comic Alegrías. There was also a snatch of Farruca which was impressive—but, like all the other solos, it was much too short.

Carmen Amaya herself began unhappily, dancing to orchestral music a gypsified Fandango (i.e. one done in Flamenco style). Though the orchestra (under the baton of Angel Curras) played better than is usual in Spanish shows, such music is a very unsatisfactory accompaniment for Flamenco, which demands the sensitive collaboration of dancer, singer and guitarist. (The relationship between dancer and musicians is exactly the same in Flamenco as in Indian dancing, from which Flamenco is derived.)

Carmen Amaya was seen to somewhat better advantage in a Soleares, with singer and two guitarists. Her face, with skin stretched tight over a most striking bone structure, shone with the ferocity characteristic of this artist, and one could sense her exerting every possible effort to get the most out of each step. Unfortunately her dancing failed to make its proper impact because it lacked femininity, variety and spontaneity: there was too much tension, and tension in the wrong places.

In the second half of the programme she made a much better impression, for she wore men's clothes and performed powerful male steps which suit her very well. I particularly admired her *taconeo*—a sequence in which the dancer concentrates on foot-rhythms, with hardly any arm movements. And she did very well at the end, when she changed to a dark male costume and showed in an Alegrías that she possesses an admirable sense of humour. By this time the *duende* (demon) which gypsy dancers need to dance well was clearly in possession of her, and she produced a whole series of fine grotesqueries. I was glad to see her using her hands well, producing some powerful clicks from several fingers in each hand. Flamenco dancers have done fine work in adapting Flamenco foot-rhythms to castanets, and often play them well as they dance; but this makes it impossible for them to use their hands with the proper Oriental fluidity, and when a dancer can snap her fingers as well as Carmen Amaya she does well to abandon castanets for some of her Flamenco items.

The Flamenco singer Rafael Ortega was competent but hardly inspiring. On the other hand the guitar interludes played by José Motos were both varied and delightful, in an Oriental *guitarra morisca* style (stressing melody rather than harmony) which was well suited to a programme based on Flamenco dancing.

DIE FLEDERMAUS AT THE COLISEUM

Continuing its policy of presenting operetta for long runs at the Coliseum in order to keep its finances in good order, the Sadler's Wells Opera revived *Die Fledermaus* with two singing casts "of equal status". Wendy Toye's production gained a good deal from expanding into the wide spaces of the Coliseum's stage, and made good use of the revolve—as did the designs of James Bailey (whose evocation of a dainty rococo Baden aroused applause almost every time the scene changed). Howell Glynne (who sings at all performances except the Saturday matinée) gave an outstanding performance as Frosch, the prison warder: it was an unexpected pleasure to see a singer miming with the perfect timing and deliciously judged fantasy of a great clown. His walk forward (from one fifth position to another) was alone sufficient to suggest the role, even if he did not sing a note: he is a bass of extraordinary versatility, who has just taken his eighty-sixth role, and is perfectly at home in the frothy world of Straussian Vienna. This is equally true of Frederick Sharp, who gave the prison governor a most attractive crumbling elegance.

Being both producer and choreographer, Wendy Toye had the opportunity of bringing together dancers, chorus and principals in a fluid way, and took reasonably intelligent use of this opportunity, introducing a number of mime scenes as decorative additions to the action. But the big dance-scene at the ball was staged by her in a conventional way, and the dancers of the opera ballet failed generally to catch the champagne-sparkle of the music. Fortunately there was one dancer—a small blonde girl in lilac, with a retroussé soubrette face—who brought the choreography to life, finding just the right facial expression at each moment and catching all the ebullience of the waltz rhythms. She was particularly effective when Prince Orlovsky started to dance with her, expressing an individual and appropriate mixture of excitement and confusion. We may well hope to see more of this promising artist.

OTHELLO AT STRATFORD

If ever there was an artist born to play *Othello*, it is Paul Robeson: he is fitted for it by temperament, physique, voice, and even by race. With such equipment, he can give a single one of Othello's lines more imaginative resonance, nobility and impact than almost any other actor could put into a whole scene, and his performance at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre is not to be missed.

Just because everyone knew what to expect from Robeson, bookings have been very heavy. But what is infuriating about the present Stratford production is that it runs counter to Robeson's performance at almost every turn. There is no reason why Tony Richardson should not mount an avant-garde, gimmicky production of *Othello* at Stratford, with Iago dressed like a cowboy and played in staccato fashion by Sam Wanamaker as a parody of method acting; a hard and bitter Desdemona, drawn apparently from some apocryphal Ibsen play; a bedroom high up and difficult of access; and many of the most important scenes played in almost complete darkness. But it is sheer madness to combine this with the greatest *Othello* of the century: one feels so angry at the way his performance is cribb'd, cabin'd and confin'd that one longs to see a different throat under the hands of Othello at the end of the play.

What is particularly maddening about this production is that Tony Richardson has exceptional talent for choreography, and from time to time uses it to make very striking effects. This is particularly true of the drinking scene, which rises to a terrifying climax of drunken ferocity as the actors hurl themselves across the stage. These choreographic scenes are worked out at considerable length, with the greatest attention to detail, and must have taken up a great deal of rehearsal time. They are by no means arbitrary additions to the play—each one is firmly integrated into the development of the action—but to gain time for them Tony Richardson has the actors hurry through their lines in other scenes, with the result that much of the speech is incomprehensible . . . What I should like to see is Tony Richardson's production of *Othello* as a dance-drama at the Royal Court, with a cast bringing together dancers and actors trained in expressive movement.

TOUMANOVA AT SADLER'S WELLS

In a single month London saw no less than three of the *monstres sacrés* of the dance theatre of today—first Tcherina, then Carmen Amaya, and finally Toumanova. They have a good deal in common, in temperament and artistic outlook, and even resemble each other facially: all three show the same exotic bland of East and West in their features. Of course they also differ a good deal: Tcherina, for example, goes in for a very feminine sort of seductiveness which is at the opposite pole from Carmen Amaya's ferocity. But they are very much alike in laying every possible stress on stage presence and the expression of their personality, without taking much account of choreography or their surroundings.

Toumanova is the purest example of the *monstre sacré*, for she chose to present herself almost alone, with only a partner, without decor, for a four-week season: when one compares this with the efforts made by a ballet company to present a varied repertoire and changing casts over a similar period, one can get some measure of the extraordinary self-confidence of this artist. It was in fact this quality which stood out most strongly when she came on the stage, and helped her to display her quite exceptional stage presence. Unfortunately she did not back up this presence with dancing of comparable quality: in the last few years her technique and style have deteriorated, so that at times she gave the impression—unforgivable in a ballerina—of being clumsy. This was particularly true when she started a run across the stage, for then she held her arms out in a stiff and awkward manner. Whenever she had a difficult step to tackle, she was inclined to hunch her shoulders and poke her head forward, and her turns were slow and laboured. She had clearly worked hard on one technical device—holding a balance on one pointe in arabesque for a long time—and used this a good deal; but the effect she created savoured more of the circus than the ballet stage, for she did it in such a way as to make it look as difficult as possible.

It was hard to know what to make of the choreography of the show: this was attributed to various names (including that of Toumanova herself), and yet it all looked very similar. In every item we saw the same limited collection of steps—*developpé* in second, supported *fouetté* turn and so on—and there was very little attempt to fit the steps to the theme or the music. Paradoxically enough the completely empty character of the choreography was displayed most clearly in a Spanish suite (with choreography by Hernandez) in which the steps were put together with slightly more continuity and intelligence than elsewhere: here a "Spanish" flavour was sought for with the aid of exactly the same gimmicks—a wrist bent back over the head, a backward bend of the top half of the body—that have been accepted in Russia since the days of Petipa as characteristic of Spanish dancing, though in fact the sort of dancing they decorate is as remote from Spain as anything can be.

One item was in such bad taste that it aroused laughter from the audience. Before the music started for *The Dying Swan*, a spot moved slowly around the stage for quite a time. One can only assume that Toumanova wished to evoke the performance in memory of Pavlova at which a spot was made to follow the pattern of her dance while the music played. But the spot moving *in silence* merely suggested that either the dancer or the conductor had missed a cue.

In her choice of partner Toumanova showed almost equal lack of discrimination: it is a very long time since I have seen a male dancer attempt difficult solos with such inadequate technique. Wladimir Oukhtomsky proved to be so turned in that he never managed a single fifth position—the basis of all classical dancing—and he was almost completely lacking in *plié*, so that he made quite a thud when he landed from a leap. He showed some talent for acting in a Polish item in which he seemed to be impersonating the ghost of a dead lover (the programme was not very helpful), but this was not enough to make one forgive him for faults of technique and style so numerous that a catalogue would be tedious.

Anyone with memories of the halcyon days of the de Basil company in the early thirties (when Toumanova was one of the three "baby ballerinas" who caught the imagination of the public) cannot but be saddened by Toumanova's latest avatar. She is the type of artist who needs the most firm guidance and control, within the framework of a ballet company, if she is to make the best of her talents.

Unexpectedly, it was in *The Dying Swan*—the item for which she was least suited by style and temperament—that she gave the clearest hint of her potentialities. Here technical deficiencies were not important (the dance being unexacting in this respect) and at one moment, when her back was turned to the audience, she moved her arms in symmetrical and violent sweeps, up and down, which suggested some convulsion of nature. In scale and quality these movements were quite wrong for the exquisite and pathetic swan imagined by Fokine and Pavlova; but they came over with great force, expressing exactly what Toumanova wanted to say, and they vividly suggested the performance this artist might give in the right sort of choreography—assuming that she was firmly produced and worked hard at her technique.

Some of my colleagues detected a certain slight improvement in the second week's programme (which included two fresh items). I was not so fortunate: Lifar's staccato choreography for the *Romeo and Juliet* pas de deux seemed to me just as bad in its own way as the more old-fashioned choreography on view in the other items, and the exacting choreography of the *Casse-Noisette* pas de deux cast the same cruel spotlight on the technical and stylistic deficiencies of the dancers as the *Don Quixote* pas de deux the week before. One happy memory remains: the exceptional beauty of cut and general finish of Toumanova's costumes—which contrasted in the most violent way with the appalling new tutus inflicted on the girls in *Danses Concertantes* at Covent Garden.

Carmen Amaya

SUNDAY BALLET CLUB

On April 26th the Sunday Ballet Club presented at Wyndham's Theatre a programme of five ballets, four of which were produced by choreographers who had already staged ballets for the S.B.C. This is exactly the sort of thing I had in mind when I discussed the policy of the S.B.C. after its last programme, and I am happy to say that the new policy paid off handsomely. Nearly all the new ballets had merit of some sort; nothing was embarrassingly bad, and two were of exceptional interest, so that the evening as a whole was enjoyable as well as artistically significant.

The major ballet of the evening, which ended the programme, was Norman Dixon's *The Cord*. Very sensibly, he continued on the line of development he began last June with *Voice in the Wilderness*, putting into practice all that he learned and avoiding a number of the faults of the earlier ballet. His style was, as before, derived from the two major Tudor ballets with which he is familiar because they are in the Rambert repertoire—*Jardin aux Lilas* and *Dark Elegies*—and his method of tackling his psychological theme was completely Tudorian. He was quite right to take all this from Tudor: nothing is more dangerous for a young artist than a premature attempt to develop a style of his own, for then he is likely to become the prisoner of his own mannerisms—as has happened to a number of talented English choreographers. He also showed good sense in taking his theme from Tudor's ballet *Undertow* (which shows a child growing up in a twisted way because he is jealous of his father and emotionally bound to his mother): since Dixon could not be familiar with the choreography of *Undertow* (which has not been performed in England since 1946) he was forced to treat the theme in his own way.

In one important respect his treatment of the Oedipus theme (as modernised by Tudor) was original and excellent: this was in the

stress he put on the mother (who is dropped by Tudor after the prologue). He obtained from Ann Horn a remarkably warm and mature performance in this role, going far beyond anything she has yet achieved. The acting side of this role was far more important than the dancing, but this was quite appropriate, and helped Ann Horn to escape from the excessive tension which has been her enemy in the past. She made very clear the deep maternal affection of the mother for her baby, and showed how this natural feeling degenerated into over-possessiveness as the child grew up.

Dixon's other main addition to the Tudor story—the guerrilla soldiers returning from the war—was much less satisfying. These soldiers came all too clearly from a number of dance-dramas in the Jooss manner, and had an expressionist crudity which did not fit in at all with the psychological complexity of the rest of the ballet. The same can be said of the Father, one of the guerrillas.

The Son, danced by Gary Burne, was of course the central figure; but he failed to dominate the ballet as Hugh Laing dominated *Undertow*. This was probably due in the main to the fact that Gary Burne (unlike Ann Horn, who has been lucky enough to dance in Tudor ballets for years) failed almost entirely to come to grips with the Tudor style, which presents grave difficulties to dancers of the Royal Ballet when first they encounter it.

But Dixon could scarcely have done better than cast Antoinette Sibley as the Young Girl. Though this simple role made no great demands on Sibley's interpretative abilities, she gave it all the charm and spontaneity characteristic of her work. (It is fascinating to speculate how she would interpret the young girl in Tudor's *Pillar of Fire*—a masterpiece which the Royal Ballet is now capable of performing better than ever it has been performed before.)

Like *Voice in the Wilderness*, *The Cord* suffered from the fact that the music did not entirely suit the story. Ernest Toch's Symphony No. 3 was right in its general mood and style, but inevitably it did not support the development of the action in detail: in the ballroom scene, for example, it gave no suggestion of a ball. The end of the ballet (when the hero is supposed to fall into new bondage) was very abrupt and obscure, presumably because there was no music for a suitably extended choreographic treatment.

The other important new work to be seen at Wyndham's was a ballet for two dancers by Clover Roope, *Disenchantment*. This was described incomprehensibly in the programme as "Descriptions in movement for two dancers in two scenes", and was correspondingly obscure in its visual development on the stage. What we mainly saw was a series of pas de deux in which a boy in jeans and a girl in a red skirt alternately became estranged and reconciled. But there was one solo for the girl which was magnificently clear and expressive, in a naïve way proper to a very young choreographer: here the crisp classical steps were made to convey the bewilderment, frustration and despair of the girl, largely because they fitted the music so perfectly—and because the music (specially composed for the ballet by John White) was exactly suited to the mood of the dance and the style of the choreography. Nothing could show more clearly how important it is for choreographers to have their music either specially composed or specially arranged for them by a composer: there are a number of talented composers about who rarely get the chance of having their works performed, and these have a great deal to contribute to the developing art of ballet. Brenda Bolton danced her role with suitable control and precision, but I feel that Clover Roope herself would have put rather more pathos and variety of expression into it; if and when she revives the ballet, I hope she will cast herself in this role.

Another ballet which gained enormously from having music specially composed for it was *Moses*, with choreography by Naomi Benari Hadda and music for a small wind ensemble by David Hadda which was exactly right in scale. The choreography showed a rather conventional and monotonous mixture of modern dance and ballet elements, but the chief fault of this ballet was the weak story—the baby Moses hidden at the river bank and taken up by Pharaoh's daughter. The Old Testament has scores of dramatic stories likely to inspire an Anglo-Israeli choreographer and much better suited to her familiar hybrid style (which is not at all suited to ornamental and atmospheric dancing.)

Robert de Warren staged a pas de quatre, *Petite Suite Rococo*, which suffered from a confusion of thought in the planning. Evidently the choreographer wanted to produce some witty variations on period themes, putting his danseuses into blocked shoes even though these were not invented for a long time after the rococo period. But he clearly did not know enough about the dances of the period to make many comments on them, witty or otherwise, and after a charming beginning the ballet lost its way. Instead of using music by Gluck (who is hardly rococo) he would have been better advised to use modern neo-classical music, by a composer such as Stravinsky or Prokofiev, and profit from the witty distortions in the score. But the costumes (designed by the choreographer) were charming, and Margaret Lyons looked delightful in yellow, showing real promise in the insouciance of her facial expressions.

The weakest of all the new ballets was, ironically enough, arranged by Meriel Evans, the only one of the five choreographers who is regularly employed in this capacity. (She is choreographer to the Covent Garden Opera Ballet). *Rumanische Volkstanze* was clearly intended as a series of "cod" folk-dances: four artists from the Royal Ballet performed variations on familiar character steps from *Swan-Lake* and *Coppelia*, as well as phoney character steps with the toes turned up. But Bela Bartok's *Rumanian Dances* are quite unsuited to such treatment, particularly when they are slow and sad; and it was painful to see Bartok's exotic rhythms ignored in such a galumphing fashion. I should perhaps add that real Rumanian folk-dances are very exciting, with the most intriguing off-beats: I am quite baffled by the outlook of a choreographer who attempts to parody something which is (a) excellent and (b) rhythmically beyond her.

RAM GOPAL

Just before the war, Ram Gopal began his career as a recital dancer, giving solo recitals in Hollywood, New York, Warsaw and Paris. But at this time London audiences were quite unaccustomed to solo recitals, and before Ram Gopal tackled London he surrounded himself (very sensibly) with a small company of dancers and musicians. During the war he gave solo performances in India, but after the war he made London his headquarters and presented himself (in Britain and other European countries) at the head of a company which grew larger and larger, until two years ago he was able to perform in theatres as large as the Royal Festival Hall and the Hippodrome.

Unfortunately the presentation of large-scale Indian ballets is not Ram Gopal's forte, and the increase in scale of his presentations brought in its train grave artistic problems. It must have also saddled him with a great burden of administration. At all events the London audience has recently become accustomed to solo recitals, and Ram Gopal was therefore encouraged to follow his solo tours in America with three solo recitals at the Mahatma Gandhi Hall, presented by the Asian Music Circle.

Quite rightly Ram Gopal devoted the major part of his recital to the Tanjore temple style (Bharata Natyam) to which he is best suited by temperament and training. Easily the most vivid and effective item in this part of the programme was a song-dance *Sariga Kongu*, of which he brought out the tender lyricism, simplicity and gentle pastoral humour; he established clearly each of the four characters (or groups of characters) and made a great deal of Krishna's impudent and irresistible charm as he steals the butter. Ram Gopal introduced this item by explaining the meaning of the mudras, doing this so clearly that even those seeing the dance for the first time could follow it without difficulty, and adding so such charm and intelligence that the introduction was almost as entertaining as the dance itself. His voice is excellent, with just a trace of Indian accent, and I regretted that he did not himself record the taped commentary on later items into which an American voice introduced a disturbing element.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,—Having read your critic's article on the Gala Performance at Covent Garden*, I would like to draw your attention to the paragraph concerning the *Don Quixote* pas de deux. He says of Miss Nerina (to quote his own words) that to the best of his knowledge she has invented a new way of doing posé turns.

It surprises me that a critic who presumably attends the ballet with such great regularity should have failed to observe that Miss Nerina performs this step in *Coppelia* Act III.

It is also difficult to believe that a critic could fail to recall the memorable occasion of Miss Beriosova's début as Swanilda at Sadler's Wells in 1951. Miss Beriosova has always performed posé turns in *Coppelia* Act III in this manner. I cannot do better than quote Mr. John Hall's comments in "Ballet" of June 1952.

'The text-book execution of many steps must, alas, remain the unattainable ideal, but Svetlana Beriosova has succeeded in performing a manège of pirouettes in accordance with the theory that each turn should commence from a jeté. This entails landing on the pointe from a height of six to nine inches, but since the achievement is effortless, the effect is breathtaking—and the step should certainly be called 'pas de Beriosova." SARAH WELBY

**Ballet Today, April 1959*

FERNAU HALL WRITES:

I was most interested by Miss Welby's letter, which establishes the fact that Beriosova was the first to perform what—following John Hall—we may call the 'pas de Beriosova'. I was, of course, well aware that both Beriosova and Nerina have been performing this step for a number of years; it was my impression that Nerina did it first, but clearly I was mistaken.

I should very much like to have the views of others on this step. A teacher might well look on it as a fault: in fact dancers are trained to make a small imperceptible jump before a *posé*, but a big and obvious jump changes the whole character of the step. Myself, I consider it a valuable addition to the classical technique—but one which is suited only to dancers with very strong feet.

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

REVIVAL OF THE PRINCE OF THE PAGODAS

Seeing *The Prince of the Pagodas* again brought home vividly that this is in some ways a model of how not to make a ballet. First, let us take the story. Attempts by sophisticated twentieth-centurians to write a serious fairy-tale for grown-ups are almost bound to fail. The real fairy-tales are rooted in myth, and have many hidden meanings as well as their own peculiar logic and consistency which keep them alive from century to century. But Cranko flounders helplessly in the world of fantasy, unable to achieve either consistency or poetry. The Emperor, for example, is a figure of crude slapstick farce in Act 1, and a figure of expressionist melodrama (somewhat in the manner of the last scene of *The Rake's Progress*) in Act III. The Green Salamander blindfolds Belle Rose in Act II, Scene II, and then turns into a handsome prince: why? (If there is any symbolism here, it is very muddled; I can only imagine that Cranko wanted Blair to do a dance without his tail, but could not think of any convincing way to arrange this.) Worst of all is the fact that the story keeps petering out, so that we are left with dances which have no meaning and are in effect divertissements. In Act II, Scene I, for example, there is a journey to the Kingdom of the Pagodas: this is established in such a perfunctory manner (Belle Rose being carried across the stage a few times) that we forget entirely what is supposed to be happening.

Now let us take a quick look at the characterisation. The unfortunate Prince is given no chance to establish any character at all: when he is a salamander he is forced to crawl on the floor, and when he is a prince he is just a danseur noble, as in any conventional 19th century ballet. Belle Rose is just Beriosova performing her usual lyrical movements; this princess is quite passive, allowing herself to be pushed around without any resistance or protest—in violent contrast to the heroines of real fairy-tales. We have already glanced at the Emperor. Belle Epine is clearly meant to be a nasty type, but the choreography assigned to her in Act I is so inept that it prevents even Julia Farron from making it expressive—and this artist is so intelligent and has such dramatic ability that she can find expressive possibilities in almost any combination of steps. (Making her dance with bent knees is totally wrong: it takes away all grace without giving any suggestion of wickedness.) The Fool is even more passive than Belle Rose, drifting around in a gormless manner from one end of the ballet to the other.

The music has passages of grace and charm—I like particularly the Balinese gamelan melody (which suggests the exoticism of the Kingdom of the Pagodas) and several of the solos for danseuses—but it is amazing how often Britten, a composer with a great deal of stage experience, makes elementary mistakes which prevent the ballet from building up in a satisfactory way. When Belle Rose performs a conventional pas de deux with the Prince, there should be a suggestion of ecstasy, with the extended melodic lines proper to support work; instead, we hear a series of quick, jagged figures in a rather sour mood, and there is a loud brassy climax which has no relationship to the tender emotions which the dancers are supposed to be expressing. On the other hand at the end of Act III, Scene II (when the Prince takes off his mask and tail and claims Belle Rose) the music almost fades away completely, and gives no suggestion of a triumphant dénouement.

Some solo dances remain vividly in the memory at the end of the evening. Maryon Lane, for example, attacking her fire-dance with her unique combination of precision and controlled abandon, and making the *relevés* with one foot over-crossed on the knee look quite witty. (But not even this superb artist could cope with the clumsy steps in which she was made to hold her own foot: what on earth have such steps to do with fire?) Then there was Merle Park stopping the show with her exquisitely impudent finger-snapping dance in the final divertissement. And there was Beriosova looking bewitchingly graceful and lyrical whenever the music was appropriate in mood and rhythm.

Unfortunately these items were buried in a great mass of stodge. The extent to which the ballet has been padded out beyond its natural length can be judged by comparison with another modern fairy-tale ballet, *The Firebird:* this is only one-third as long, but has a far more complex and exciting story. Clearly the reforms by which Fokine transformed the art of ballet early in the century have no meaning for Cranko.

JOB—WITH GARY BURNE AS SATAN

Satan is a very difficult part; much of it is static, and the one big solo has some barefoot modern-dance movements which could easily look embarrassingly childish. Gary Burne has the right sort of muscular physique to make the most of Satan's unusual costume (which consists almost entirely of lines of green paint outlining the muscles, as in Blake's etchings) and when *Job* was performed on 21st April he tried to give the title role the right combination of sullen nobility and viciousness. But his performance could not compare in any way with that of David Blair (or, for that matter with the performances of Anton Dolin and Robert Helpmann when these artists were in their prime): Gary Burne was too delicate and tentative, wobbling slightly when he should have held a pose with great power, and at times allowing a hand which was invisible to him (being behind his back) to wander away from the proper Blakean line. Among other things, he needs to study the illustrations from Blake's book which inspired many of the poses and groupings of this ballet.

In this same programme Doreen Wells took over the female lead in *Danses Concertantes*. One may suppose that she took over Maryon Lane's part at short notice, for there were moments in the excruciatingly difficult pas de deux when she and her partner did not co-ordinate their movements very well. But at other times she showed real talent: she lacks the very rare precision of line and musicality of Maryon Lane, but she has a pleasant personality and the beginnings of a personal style. What she needs is to tackle roles with a very positive quality, roles in which she can lose herself: this is far more easy for young artists (and far more rewarding) than the attempt to inject quality and meaning into relatively neutral roles.

LYNN SEYMOUR IN SWAN LAKE

The city of Vancouver in Canada has been a remarkable nursery of dancers for several decades. In the thirties, for example, it supplied two danseuses to the de Basil company at a time when non-Russian dancing had such little prestige that newcomers were required to take Russian names. After the War the Vancouver girl Lois Smith (prima ballerina of the Canadian National Ballet) emerged as a great classical ballerina of international stature, with a particular gift for Odette-Odile. Now Lynn Seymour (née Springbett) has been given the rare honour of dancing Odette-Odile at Covent Garden when she has just reached twenty-one, even though she has had relatively little experience in minor solo roles. She was seen in Vancouver when the Royal Ballet reached there on tour in 1953, and joined the Royal Ballet School on a scholarship in 1954. In 1957 she joined the corps de ballet of the second company: while on tour in Australia in 1958–59 her dancing advanced so rapidly that she was given the role of Odette-Odile no less than nine times, and on May 6 her performance of this role at Covent Garden (with Donald Macleary as partner and John Lanchbery as conductor) signalized the return of the wanderers and the integration of the two companies into one big company of 180 dancers.

When she appeared in Act II for the first time I could not understand why she had been given such a great honour. Her body was very supple, and her feet pointed exceptionally well; but her dancing was quite lacking in feeling, and her face remained blank. In the same way her mime was curiously drab in quality: it was done correctly, with right sort of breadth, but one could see that she was reproducing with care and intelligence exactly what she had been taught without putting anything of herself into it. Her line was generally tolerable, even if lacking in the magical, ecstatic quality proper to Odette; but from time to time she did something that was both wrong and ugly—for example, when she put out her right hand in front of her waist in preparation for a pirouette.

As soon as she started the big pas de deux (which begins and ends as a pas de trois with Benno) she looked far more promising; for here was real nobility and a continuity of movement reminiscent of Ulanova. (I feel sure that whoever produced her in this role—perhaps John Field—must have studied the films of Ulanova's Odette very carefully).

Unfortunately she did not maintain this level. Both as Odette and Odile she took most of the joy out of the steps by phrasing them in a pedestrian, square-cut manner that was completely at variance with Tchaikovsky's music and the contrasted moods and styles of the choreography (tender and lyrical in Acts II and IV, brilliant and sinister in Act III). Take the enchainment in Act III when Odile goes up to conspire with Von Rothbart, then turns to Siegfried and does a supported pirouette followed by a *grand rond de jambe*; Margot Fonteyn has shown that when these two steps are properly joined together the sudden deceleration as the leg whips around in the *rond de jambe* brings out Odile's nature perfectly, and gives the spectator a shock of intense pleasure: but Lynn Seymour showed us a dull pirouette followed by a quite separate and equally dull *rond de jambe*. . . She clearly has real talent, but is too immature both technically and artistically for Odette-Odile.

Donald Macleary showed an elegant line (with excellent pirouettes and *tours en l'air*) in the role of Siegfried; moreover his handsome face made him look a convincing prince. But his acting was rather too affected and too graceful in a feminine way to provide a real contrast to Odette-Odile: he would do well to study the work of the best Danish danseurs.

It was satisfying in some ways to hear the orchestra conducted by John Lanchbery, whose professionalism and balletic expertise con-

—Continued at foot of column 2 next page

— In Britain —
by
HELEN ROSS

t.v.

— In France —
by
JEAN COQUELLE

Sunday, May 3rd. B.B.C. Television. The Lady and the Fool.

In the past year Margaret Dale has produced a number of successful full-length ballets, but this version of *The Lady and the Fool* with choreography by John Cranko proved a very dull affair.

The various cuts and additions made to the stage version added nothing of value to the production. The ballet opened with the small Clown Bootface scavenging in the dustbins, and introduced a narration which confused rather than clarified the story, particularly as it was given in the beginning and the end, but not in the middle, where the action of the story was most confusing from the visual point of view. There was no apparent reason for omitting the solo for the Prince of Arroganza, as the other two suitors were allowed to dance theirs. Throughout the ballet, the corps de ballet and soloists were completely divorced from each other, and this made most of the scenes appear disjointed. The close-ups usually managed to cut out the most important person, the worst example of this occurring in the dance performed by the two Clowns at the party. The dance ends with Bootface lying on the ground and Moondog standing triumphantly over him. The continuity of the story is in the arm movements and facial expression of Moondog, but we only saw his legs!

The dancers all performed well. Ray Powell and Ronald Hynd were the two Clowns, David Shields, Bob Stevenson and Peter Wright were the suitors and Svetlana Beriosova danced the part of the Lady. The greatest assets of Beriosova's dancing in this role on the stage are her lovely line and breadth of movement, but owing to the fact that the cameras were usually very badly placed (so that the dancers moved towards and away from camera) none of these things were shown to advantage—except in one instance, which showed exactly what had been wrong with the other camera-angles.

The sets and floor pattern distracted from the dancers, and the lighting was so poor that even the beautiful Beriosova appeared to look plain. Her unbecoming costume and headdress did not help matters.

Margaret Dale would be wise to think carefully about her next choice of ballet: both this and her previous choice (*Casse-Noisette*) have long patches of dullness when produced in the theatre, and if they cannot be improved by imaginative television technique they are best left alone.

LONDON REVIEWS—*Continued from page 9*

trasted strongly with the pathetic amateurism which is common in the podium at Covent Garden. In Act III he whipped the artists through their character dances at a spanking pace that made the steps stand out far more vividly than usual. Unfortunately, however, he has no feeling for the tender and passionate romanticism of Tchaikovsky's music for Acts II and IV, and these suffered in consequence.

FERNAU HALL

ASSOCIATION OF BALLET CLUBS

The Evening of Ballet presented by the Association of Ballet Clubs at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre on 2nd May consisted of a programme varying widely both in the subject matter of the ballets and in the standards of choreography and execution. Although this is only to be expected in an association of this kind, the choreographers must bear in mind the talents of the dancers at their disposal and adapt their ideas accordingly. Failure to do this can only culminate in embarrassment all round! Other weaknesses in the choreography were the inordinate length of one or two of the narrative ballets and a lack of musicality, amounting in some cases to a blatant disregard of the music.

Buttermilk Point, presented by the Irish Ballet Society, contained none of the foregoing weaknesses, and the fact that it was undoubtedly one of the successes of the evening can be attributed largely to Sheila O'Hagan's choreography, which revealed both charm and wit and was well within the talents of the performers.

Bristol Ballet Club's contribution, *A Military Affair*, with choreography by Dorothy Woods, and Enfield Ballet Theatre Club's *The Cad*—choreography by Maria Balinska—were reasonably well danced, though much too long for their themes. Of the abstract ballets, the most effective was *Mood*, with choreography in the modern style by Jean Anderson and presented by the Phoenix Ballet Group (Newcastle-upon-Tyne).

The programme concluded with a work from the Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club, the members of which are fortunate in having the well-known teacher Maria Zybina as their ballet mistress. Based on a Russian fairy tale and danced to traditional music, her ballet *Easter Magic* was charmingly presented and her choreography made full use of the large cast.

JACQUELINE JOHNSON

Saturday, May 2nd. Invitation to the Dance "La Nuit est une Sorciere".

The Télévision Française has recently included among its transmissions a regular programme devoted to ballet *Invitation to the Dance*. This is produced by M. Robert Favre le Bret (who is Secretary-General both of the Paris Opéra and the Cannes Film Festival) and directed by Pierre Viallet.

Even if not very artistic, the basic idea of this programme is at least fairly interesting. It begins with a short introduction (boring because confused) spoken by the film actress Dany Robin (who at one time studied dancing) and M. Favre le Bret's wife, who teaches dancing at the Opéra. After this little introduction (illustrated by classroom exercises) there is a performance of a ballet chosen among those which have aroused the most interest in Paris. The series began with *Frères Humains* (Human Brothers) a ballet by Michael Descombey which was produced some time ago by the B B.C. and received, I believe, the most appalling reviews imaginable.

The staging of this mediocre work was straightforward, and aroused some hopes for the future of M. Viallet as a director of television dancing. Alas! The systematic massacre of the beautiful *Balance à Trois* by Jean Babilée destroyed these early illusions. Even the personality of the great Babilée could not make one forget the devastating incompetence of the technical direction.

On May 2 there was a transmission of the third programme in this series, *La Nuit est une Sorcière* (Night is a Witch); this had jazz music by Sydney Bechet and choreography by Pierre Lacotte. This time the addition of feeble choreography to bad direction resulted in something really distressing. However, these failures contained within themselves some important lessons:—

1. It is dangerous to make a film or television version of a ballet conceived for the stage unless this is done as a documentary reproduction; here one finds the same problem of incompatibility that is met with when a stage production of a play is transferred to the studio. The fact is that television, like the film, is a new medium of expression—soon it will be a new art form—and it is entitled to demand a new manner, a new style of choreography.

2. It is difficult to film dancers. To succeed in this one must avoid choosing the worst director available. M. Viallet has systematically ignored *movement* in order to concentrate on faces and scenery, thus making nonsense of the choreography. In *Balance à Trois*, for example, the whole of Claire Sombert's solo took place behind a punch-ball: at the best moments of the dance one saw arms or legs but never the entire dancer. Quite rightly, the balletomanes objected violently when, in even the best sequences of *Frères Humains*, they saw dancers deprived of legs or feet by poor framing. M. Viallet's excessive affection for long tracking shots would perhaps be justified in a remake of the Orson Welles film *The Magnificent Ambersons*, but here it is out of place: what is needed is the adaptation of the camera to the movements of the dancers.

What is surprising is that M. Favre le Bret—who is a man of taste and is experienced both in film and ballet—should have allowed himself to fall into such a trap. In fact he chose ballets the best suited for translation into film; unfortunately, however, his ideas were ruined by the technicians to whom he confided them.

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Margot Fonteyn, Mr. Komaki and Michael Somes stop to admire a plum tree on a visit to Niyo Castle, Kyoto *Photo:* Yomiuri

BALLET AROUND THE WORLD

TOKYO

THE KOMAKI COMPANY

—by JOHN HAYLOCK

THE Komaki Ballet School is situated in a quiet suburb of Tokyo, near a station, and all you have to do on arriving is to say "Komaki" to the ticket collector and he will direct you. The school is a large wooden building equipped with a spacious rehearsal room containing the usual practice bars, mirrors, etc. and when I visited the school recently the principal dancers and corps de ballet were rehearsing *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, keenly watched by the remainder of the Company. All were clearly excited at the thought of dancing with Dame Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes. I watched Miss Ayako Ogawa and Miss Tachikawa direct a rehearsal of the pas de quatre from *Swan Lake*, and was very impressed to see these young Japanese dancers practising western ballet, which is as different from Japanese traditional dancing as walking is from skating, with such verve and devotion.

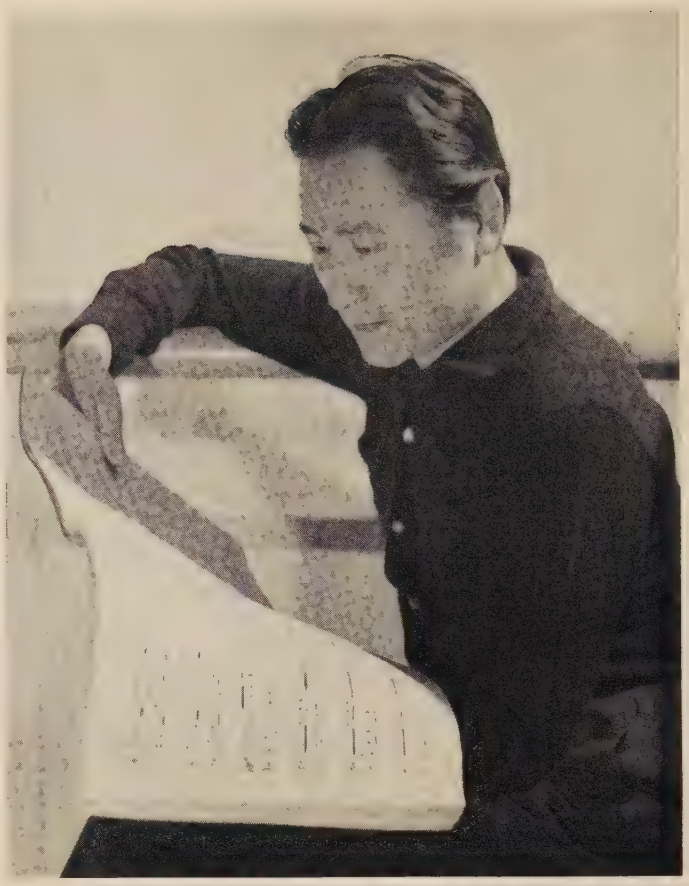
Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes were not the first foreign dancers to visit Tokyo to dance with the Komaki company, although Mr. Komaki regarded this visit as the most important, for it is part of his policy to give his company the invaluable experience of performing with leading world dancers. In 1952 Sonia Arova danced in *The Sleeping Beauty* with Naoto Seki as the Prince, and in 1954 Nora Kaye and Paul Szilard danced with Mr. Komaki in *Giselle*, *The Firebird*, *Lilac Garden* and *Pas Can Can*.

BALLET AROUND THE WORLD

(CONTINUED)

MASAHIDÉ KOMAKI, founder and managing-director of the Komaki Ballet Company, has spent all his life in ballet. At an early age he went to the Russian ballet school at Harbin in Manchuria, a town which had a large Russian community, and stayed there for seven years. After leaving Harbin Mr. Komaki joined the Ballets Russes in Shanghai, and in the years he was with that company he danced the principal roles in most of the famous ballets.

Before the Second World War there was not much interest in western classical ballet in Japan, and when Mr. Komaki returned to his homeland in 1946 there were only twenty-seven dancers in the country. Mr. Komaki gathered these dancers together and formed a ballet company; he was supported in his efforts by two writers and ballet critics: Mr. Ashiwara and Mr. Otaguro. Among the twenty-seven dancers were Mr. Yusaku Azuma and Miss Yaoko Kaitani who are now well known leading dancers in Japan with their own companies. In 1946 there were very few theatres available and little support for ballet, but the American Office of Civil Information and Education became interested and were persuaded to assist Mr. Komaki in presenting a recital at the Imperial Theatre. *Swan Lake* was performed and was an immediate success. Mr. Komaki calls this production of *Swan Lake* the real start of ballet in Japan. The small group of twenty-seven dancers has now increased to over two thousand, and ballet schools flourish throughout the land. In the same year Mr. Komaki formed his company which has become the father company of the many ballet companies now in existence in Japan; many dancers trained by Mr. Komaki have left his company to form companies of their own. In the same year the Komaki Ballet School was founded and in twelve years it has grown to a large school of twelve teachers and two hundred students.

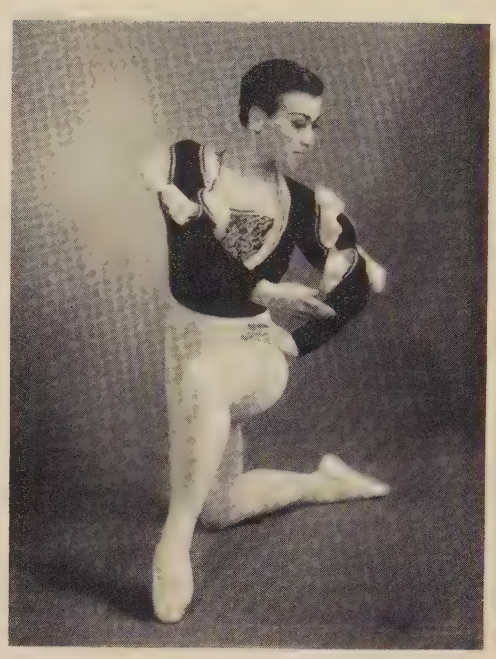


Right: Masahidé Komaki

The Company is now forty strong and includes Miss Ayako Ogawa who was trained at Sadler's Wells, Miss Toshiko Saiga who spent two years under Mme. Olga Preobrajenska in Paris, Miss Masako Sunaga and Miss Ruriko Tachikawa (Mrs. Komaki in private life) who were taught by Mr. Komaki. The premier danseur is Mr. Naoto Seki who learnt ballet at the Komaki School and has the reputation of being the leading danseur in Japan; he is a little stocky but has great skill, and dances with an assurance that is pleasing. Miss Tomoji Shakuta, also one of the principal dancers, spent two and a half years at the Metropolitan Ballet School in New York under Mr. Antony Tudor who has been to Japan and choreographed for the Komaki Company. Mr. Yasuki Sasa is one of the young dancers trained by Mr. Komaki and he shows promise; his painter in a recent production of *Pas Can Can* was notable. Another of the second dancers is Mr. Takeshi Suzuki who has danced a number of parts and proved himself to be a useful member of the company.

Below: (left to right): Ruriko Tachikawa, Ayako Ogawa and Toshiko Saiga outside the Diet Library, formerly the palace of the Crown Prince.

All these dancers took part in the recent production of *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*. Ayako Ogawa was outstanding as the Lilac Fairy in *The Sleeping Beauty* and showed herself to be a really excellent dancer, and one of the best ballerinas in Japan. Mr. Seki and Miss Sunaga deserved the enthusiastic applause they got after the Bluebird and Enchanted Princess pas de deux which they performed excellently. Mr. Sasa did well



Miss Masako Sunaga in *Giselle*.

One of the leading ballerinas of the Komaki Company and trained at the school. Has danced *Giselle*, Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty*, Odile in *Swan Lake*, and the Bluebird pas de deux in the Florestan pas de trois with Miss Tachikawa and Miss Shakuta.

Right:—
Naoto Seki premier danseur of the Komaki ballet, trained by Komaki and considered to be the best danseur in Japan. Has danced *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* (the Bluebird pas de deux in the recent production) also choreographs. Has danced principal roles in *Les Sylphides*, *Rhapsody in Blue*, the Moor in *Petrouchka*, in the Japanese ballet *Nichirin*, and others.

The Komaki Company has performed *Swan Lake* twenty-four times in Tokyo, *Coppelia* seven times, *The Sleeping Beauty* eight times, *Petrouchka* five times *Prince Igor* four times, and also *Giselle*, *Carmen*, *Don Quixote*, *Scheherazade* and *Walpurgis Nacht*. *Nichirin*, an entirely Japanese ballet based on ancient folk lore with western style music by Mr. O. Simizu and choreography by Mr. Komaki was produced in 1955.

Mr. Komaki, who is largely responsible for educating the Japanese public in ballet, is anxious to make further attempts at producing Japanese ballets such as *Nichirin* and he is working on several ideas. One of the problems for Japanese ballets based on traditional stories is costume, for the kimono is unsuitable for western style dancing; it would therefore be difficult to adapt any of the Kabuki dances to western style, especially for a Japanese audience accustomed to the magnificent kimonos and the different movements. In Japanese dancing there is little facial expression, the fan or the way the sleeves of the kimono are manipulated by the hands indicating the mood of the dance. One of the most important and perhaps one of the most difficult things for the young Japanese dancers to learn is mime, their technique is good, they are apt and quick learners, but they need to realise that in ballet the dancers are not only dancers but also characters. Another problem, one germane to most ballet companies in the world, is finance. The Japanese public is not yet ready for modern adventures in ballet, its taste is conservative, and classical ballets, such as *Swan Lake*, by far and away the favourite ballet, are preferred. However, the Komaki Company frequently perform on television and the opportunity of producing short new ballets through this medium has not been missed; Mr. Seki and Miss Shakuta have both devised the choreography for such ballets. For about two months each year the Komaki Company tour Japan giving recitals in the principal towns. The audiences are interested and eager.

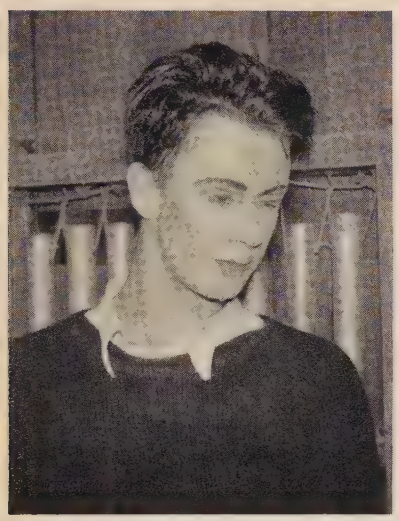
Mr. Komaki declares that he is now too old to dance, but I saw him recently as the Peruvian in *Pas Can Can*, as Rothbart in *Swan Lake* and Carabosse in *The Sleeping Beauty* and can say this is not so. He is a dancer of experience and vigour, and he is one of the few Japanese dancers who really understand mime. He insists that no dancer should attempt modern ballet until he has mastered the technique of classical ballet, and at his school thorough training is given in classical dancing. This vital, artistic man lives for ballet, and it is largely through his efforts that there is ballet in Japan today.

* * *

The next company to be featured in this series will be the Royal Winnipeg Ballet

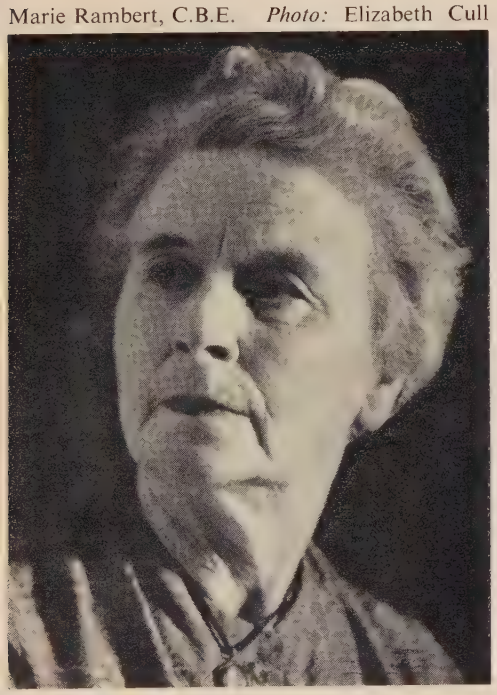
Nora Kaye and Komaki in *The Firebird*

Peggy van Praagh.
Photo: Tony Armstrong Jones



Norman Morrice. *Photo:* Marion

Marie Rambert, C.B.E. *Photo:* Elizabeth Cull



PEGGY VAN PRAAGH, on leave of absence from the Royal Ballet, is now in Israel where she has been invited in an advisory capacity by the Tel-Aviv Opera, and to lecture in Kibbutz. The rest of her leave will be spent in the U.S.A., where she is undertaking ballet training at the faculty of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival during July and August, followed by a series of lectures in Toronto, Canada.

Miss Van Praagh has also turned her apparently limitless talent to writing again. Her book "How I Became a Dancer" which was published in 1954 was re-issued in January this year as a paper-back, and she is now collaborating with Peter Brinson on a book entitled "The Art of Choreography" to be published in London and New York in 1960.

★

NORMAN MORRICE whose new ballet *Hazaña* was premièred on the opening night of Ballet Rambert's present London season at Sadler's Wells, commenced his training as a dancer in Mexico City. Friends persuaded his parents to let him take up ballet professionally, and though far from convinced that he could succeed, chaperoned by an elder brother, he came four thousand miles to England for an audition with Marie Rambert. He was given a scholarship at the Rambert School where he worked for only five months before joining the Company in 1953. Since then he has made many tours with the Ballet Rambert, to Germany, Spain, Belgium, Italy and China. His first ballet *Two Brothers* was one of the successes of the Ballet Rambert season last year.

★

MARIE RAMBERT, now in her 71st year, will leave for America one week before her Company sets out on its first visit to the United States, where they will be appearing at Jacob's Pillow for three weeks in July/August. Following this engagement the Ballet Rambert will also give two performances of *Giselle* at the Arts Centre, Manchester, Vermont, and the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont. The Company will arrive back in London on 10th August and almost immediately fly over to the Lebanon to appear at the Baalbeck Festival from August 17th to 24th.

At the time of going to press the Company are appearing at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, and during their two weeks' season, which commenced 25th May, two new ballets are being premièred—*La Reja* by John Cranko with music by Scarlatti, decor and costumes by Carl Toms, and *Hazaña* by Norman Morrice, music by American composer Carlos Surinach, decor and costumes by Ralph Koltai.

★

NORMAN DIXON, another choreographer in the news this month, is seen here (standing) with Ronald Yerrell and a dancer choosing costume designs for his second ballet *The Cord*, presented by the Sunday Ballet Club during April and reviewed elsewhere in this issue. I do not remember an occasion when the critics were so unanimous in their praise, and the general opinion is that Dixon has fulfilled the promise shown in his first ballet *Voice in the Wilderness*, which was presented in London last year.

Dixon, who is rather bewildered by the acclamation with which his ballet has been received, was with the Ballet Rambert for

—Continued at foot of next column

BACK

H.R.H. PRINCESS MARGARET opened the ne
School in Colet Gardens on the 28th April, and is
Beriosova and Nadia Nerina after watching th

STAGE

os of the Royal Ballet
en chatting to Svetlana
actise with the school.

MARGOT FONTEYN was given the greatest reception of her career to date when she returned to Covent Garden, although still officially on holiday, on May 11th, to take over the role of Giselle in place of Anne Heaton who has a foot injury.

The bouquet Dame Margot is seen carrying was from her husband, Dr. Roberto de Arias, still in political asylum in the Brazilian Embassy in Panama.

★

DORIS BARRY has been engaged as Production Manager for the new Noel Coward ballet *London Morning* which Festival Ballet will première at the Royal Festival Hall, London, on 14th July, the opening night of their nine weeks' summer season. Miss Barry will work in close association with the Company's Technical Director, Mr. Benn Toff.

Miss Barry has had an extremely varied career in the theatre starting as the first British child movie-star at the age of five years. On leaving school she went into the chorus of a musical comedy and toured the provinces for several months. She then joined the Windmill Theatre at its opening, graduated to soubrette within a year and stayed there for eight years. When she left this famous theatre she started her own dancing act in variety and cabaret. Then during the war she helped to produce and organise shows and also did shows for Ensa. Not satisfied that she was doing enough for the war effort, Miss Barry joined a Government office and worked in the Accountant-General's Department of the Ministry of Health. Here she says she had invaluable experience which later stood her in good stead when she commenced to work as Company and General Manager. Visiting her sister, Alicia Markova, in the United States, she decided to accompany her and Anton Dolin on their Far East tour, as Stage Director. Miss Barry returned to England with Katherine Dunham on her first visit to this country in 1948, and managed her presentation all over the Continent for two years. When Markova and Dolin appeared in the first Arena Ballet at the Empress Hall it was Miss Barry who devised the presentation.

Then began a long association with her sister Alicia Markova, as personal representative, travelling with her all over Europe, North and South America, Canada, etc. Miss Barry organised and staged Markova's concert performances in all cities wherever she danced, whether it was in a town hall, a grand opera house, or such places as the Albert Hall, London. She also supervised Markova's TV appearances and even directed

—Continued at foot of next column

Doris Barry. *Photo:* Jack Sheaffer

ten years, in the last few years as their leading dancer. He left the Company prior to the presentation of *The Cord* in order to be able to devote more time to choreographing new ballets. His work was liked not only by the critics, but by an enthusiastic audience, amongst whom were many world-famous ballet personalities. Mr. Arnold Spohr, Director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, told me that he was very impressed, and would like to see *The Cord* produced by his Company in Canada.

one herself in Brazil. When Ram Gopal reorganised his Company in 1956 Miss Barry managed the Company and advised on staging and production. Another unusual experience was the management of the Arizona Boys Chorus, a group of singing cowboys from Tuscon, for whom she managed a continental tour and staged their presentations for this and on TV.

During her travels in so many countries she has acted as a talent scout for impresarios, coached and helped to produce artists either individually in their acts, or for special parts in shows.

The sufferings and joys of motherhood (*Episode one*)

THE CORD

A Ballet in Five Episodes

Choreography: **NORMAN DIXON**

Music **ERNST TOCH,** Symphony No. 3.

Costumes: **RONALD YERRELL**. Settings: **STANLEY HOUGHTON**

Presented by the Sunday Ballet Club at Wyndham's Theatre, London, on 26th April, 1959.

Cast:

The Mother	Ann Horn
Her Son (as a child)	John Parsons
(as a man)	Gary Burne
The Father	Kenneth Smith

Their Neighbours:

Shirley Rees, Kenn Hasler, Susan Salomon, Frans Van Norde, Seraphina Lansdown, Gordon Bellingham.

Their Children:

Lea Lasco, Hilary Kempton, Kristine Kempton, Andrew Beeching.

A Young Girl .. .. Antoinette Sibley

Guests:

Shirley Rees, Kenn Hasler, Susan Salomon, Frans Van Norde, Seraphina Lansdown, Gordon Bellingham.

EPISODE ONE

A Street—The Return

As the curtain rises a mother (Ann Horn) is seen waiting for the return of her small son (John Parsons). She is joined by neighbours and they talk together but the mother is obviously disinterested and her impatience grows at the return of the neighbours' children without any sign of her own son.

Alone, she becomes distraught imagining that some mishap has occurred to her son. She dances a solo expressing her desire for someone to love, she remembers the birth agonies and the joy of him in her arms, the sweetness of holding him to her breast.

The arrival of her son brings the mother peace, and they are completely absorbed in the strong but possessive love which binds them.

Their solitude is broken by the distant sound of martial music, heralding the return of the men from the war, and there follows a scene of happy reunion. The son is bewildered by the reunion of his parents, and the father, noticing this growing resentment, greets the boy roughly. The child's sensitive nature is repelled, and the mother trying to pacify is torn between the two.

EPISODE TWO

The Bedroom—Transition

During the night the mother and son call to each other in their loneliness and she leaves her husband to lie beside her son. The choreographer uses this scene to show the transition from youth to manhood. The son, as a young man (Gary Burne), appears behind the billowing gauzes of the window, changing places with the child.

EPISODE THREE

A Lakeside—Discovery

Some years later on a summer afternoon mother and son are strolling arm in arm. Throughout the years their relationship has grown deeper and they have found peace and tranquillity in each other. Wandering to the edge of a lake the young man begins to throw pebbles into the water, the mother goes on leaving her son to follow at will. Gazing into the water he is completely unaware of a young girl (Antoinette Sibley) approaching him until he sees her reflection beside his. A gay youthful pas de deux follows, flirtatious yet innocent, and full of joy. But their gaiety is shattered by the arrival of the mother, who, mad with jealousy, is so frightening that the young girl runs away. The young man tries to soothe his mother but she will not listen, slaps his face and rushes away sobbing.

EPISODE FOUR

A Ballroom—Rapture

Young people are arriving for a party, and idly watching them the young man suddenly sees the girl from the lakeside arrive. He enters the ballroom and is accosted by the guests, but when she intervenes they accept him into their company, and they dance together.

All photographs in this series are by Laurence Josephs

Young Love (*Episode three*)

Abasement (*Episode three*)

EPISODE FIVE

The Terrace—New Bondage

They wander out into the garden and there follows a pas de deux expressing their newly-found love. The guests interrupt them, disturbing the draped gauze curtains, which, billowing in the breeze remind the young man of that night in his childhood when he longed for his mother. His mind becomes confused and he is unable to rid himself of these childhood memories. Despite the comforting reassurance of the young girl he becomes distraught, imagining himself as a child trying to destroy the newly found love. The interruption of the guests helps him to control his emotions. A brief moment of serenity follows and the mother then enters the garden for the final struggle.

Realising that a much deeper and satisfying love has developed between him and the young girl, he refuses his mother's pleas. He embraces the girl and the mother is lifted high in an agony of self crucifixion.

THE CRITICS

James Monahan in *The Manchester Guardian* . . . Mr. Dixon's touch has been exact and delicate. Ann Horn, Gary Burne and the bewitching Antoinette Sibley were admirable interpreters.

A. V. Coton in *The Daily Telegraph* . . . Norman Dixon's second ballet was a textbook piece for all other young choreographers . . . a complete, clear, and emotionally important dance statement . . . Ann Horn as the mother gave one of the most remarkable acting performances that anything in English Ballet can show to-day.

Andrew Porter in *The Financial Times* . . . Mr. Dixon's earlier ballet, *Voice in the Wilderness* showed him to be a choreographer of firm and individual invention. *The Cord* confirms this, and even more than its predecessor it seemed to be not just a novelty created for the occasion, but rather a work of art, pre-existing inside its creator, which had clamoured for utterance.

Elizabeth Franks in *The News Chronicle* . . . Most enterprising of the new works was *The Cord* with choreography by Norman Dixon. The three leading roles were extremely well danced—and acted—by Ann Horn, Gary Burne and that enchanting young soloist from the Royal Ballet, Antoinette Sibley. But perhaps the most arresting performance was given by an eleven-year-old boy, John Parsons. He is not merely an actor of intelligence and sensibility, but showed a natural gift of movement and a grasp of music astonishing in one so young.

Ballet Today's own critic **Fernau Hall** reviews this ballet on page 7.

Crucifixion (*Episode five*)

REPORT FROM

New York

—By WALTER SORELL

The Bolshoi Ballet has finally arrived and opened its season at the Met with the production of *Romeo and Juliet*. In considering it, we must forget the whipped-up excitement, the unnecessary fanfares of sensation and the justified elation over the arrival of such famous ballerinas as Ulanova, Plisetskaya and Struchkova. But trumpets blown too loud are quite disturbing in dealing with an artistic experience and, in many ways, a handicap for the artist and his public.

But they all are artists, and most of them great artists. Therefore, they probably want to be judged without preconceived notions, without bias or awe. The fact that these dancers have been trained from their early youth to continue a tradition, their special style of classic ballet which is so unmistakably their own, sets them apart from the searching and far more dynamic quality of the American ballets which are of today, of our time, while, in comparison, theirs appear chained to the artistic ideals of yesterday in conception and form. Particularly, their production of *Romeo and Juliet* seems to prove this point.

Juliet was first danced by Galina Ulanova. It is a part in which her every pose is poetic in its perfection and her movements the essence of ease and grace. Raissa Struchkova who followed her is less tragically dramatic than Ulanova, lighter and more youthful. Her movements are brilliant, one is always under the impression that she never sets her foot on the floor and when she awakes to the tragedy of Juliet's situation and runs to Friar Laurence's cell it is an unforgettable moment of danced drama.

These moments, however, are rarer in this production than one may think. There is the lyric scene when Romeo and Juliet find each other, their great love duet in the moonlight; there is Mercutio's dying, with the corps de ballet beautifully used to counterpoint his movements; and Romeo's dance with the dead Juliet in his arms, a climactic final point in an otherwise choreographically disappointing work.

In the movie version of this Bolshoi ballet the stress was on the mass scenes, and what I thought to have been a cinematic necessity turns out as the basic conception of Leonid Lavrovsky, the choreographer. The mass scenes in themselves are excitingly staged and belong movementwise to the best this production has to offer. Some folk material, some acrobatic feats are nicely intermingled and get the applause they deserve. In this respect it is, no doubt, an impressive spectacle.

But between the few mass scenes—the ball in Capulet's house is certainly magnificent —and the even rarer dance interludes are barren stretches of posing and walking, of miming and a great deal of hamming. It sometimes borders on the ridiculous when Tybalt, for instance, wipes the blood from his sword and draws his hand through his locks in a triumphant gesture over Mercutio's corpse, or when during his own funeral procession Lady Capulet loses herself in outbursts of Medea-like fury and frenzy.

The heavy, over-realistic scenery does not help to give this *Romeo and Juliet* the swift-dramatic and light-poetic impetus it badly needs. The technical brilliance of the danccrs seems strangely overshadowed by the choreography which is too literal and lacks the necessary daring and dynamic quality to make the danced story of the star-cross'd lovers come off. It was as if all the stars were out, but their lustre was somehow missing.

The sensational, almost frantic interest in the Bolshoi overshadows everything else going on in New York. But, meanwhile, George Balanchine and the New City Ballet are rehearsing their new and old works for the final instalment of their 10th anniversary season. Mr. Balanchine, once called upon to discuss the difference between the classic ballet and the modern dance, said laconically: "I only know good and bad dancing." To prove his point, the New York City Ballet has invited Martha Graham, the most profiled personality in the modern dance field, to work with Balanchine on the new one-hour-long ballet to the music by Anton Webern. Miss Graham will choreograph the opening and closing sections and also appear in them as performer. George Balanchine will stage the middle sections.

With the feverish expectation of the Bolshois, a most stunning and stimulating theatre experience was too quickly forgotten, *The Bewitched*, a dance-satire by Harry Partsch with choreography by Joyce Trisler. It was presented by Columbia University in co-oporation with the University of Illinois at the Juilliard Concert Hall.

For many years Harry Partsch had been building his own instruments which, for lack of any other description, come closest to the Indonisian gamelan and also have a similar hypnotic effect. The instruments

HOPE SHERIDAN has been absent from our *New York* page for over a year. During a honeymoon trip to Europe she was involved in a serious motoring accident and spent many months in hospital.

WALTER SORELL who has been our guest-critic for the past twelve months sends his final report in this issue. Both critics have seen the beginning of the Bolshoi Ballet Season in New York and have sent in a report on *Romeo and Juliet*. In printing them both we hope the reader will gain an interesting insight into the differences of opinion of the two critics.

The Bolshoi in New York

WALTER SORRELL (Contd.)

were on stage and the idea was to make them "a tumultuous part of the modern whole". an element with which "to find some ancient and magical sense of rebirth" and with which Mr. Partsch hoped to give the impression of a ritual.

The mesmerizing intention was fully realised and, although the composition was repetitive, the created monotony of invocation became effective. But whatever new, interesting, or only sensational, may be in his instruments and music, the score for *The Bewitched* can merely fulfil itself through the dance action which, in Miss Trisler's outstanding choreography, was in a variety of moods ranging from exquisite lyricism to biting satire with a great deal of tongue-in-cheek fun thrown in for good measure.

In spite of the strange-looking instruments on stage, the spotlight was on the dance excellently performed by ten young dancers including the choreographer. The staging of *The Bewitched* has proved that Joyce Trisler is a choreographer of growing sensitivity and power of invention. Most of all, her sense for theatrical effectiveness seems to be second nature with her. It was her first great work with which she promised much for the future.

The Betwitched showed her ability to convert an idea into stage images which have structure and dramatic urgency. And her task was not easy since it demanded humor and quickly changing points of view. Lyrically, the scene "Euphoria Descends a Sausalito Stairway" had the magic of poetic revelation. There was pointed fun in other scenes which more often than not had Chaplinesque irony and satirical sharpness. But if Joyce Trisler had created nothing else but her lyric duet and the savagely funny cocktail party at the end in which the mental striptease came to a climax, she would have told us unambiguously that she is to be considered one of the coming choreographers in the modern idiom.

She was ably supported by her dancers, among whom John Wilson established his comic talent. Malcolm McCormack's costumes were highly imaginative and contributed, together with Tom DeGaetani's lighting design, a great deal to a uniform colour scheme, to the eerie, bewitching quality of *The Bewitched*. If there ever was an off-beat job beating with theatrical freshness and excitement, this was it.

—by HOPE SHERIDAN

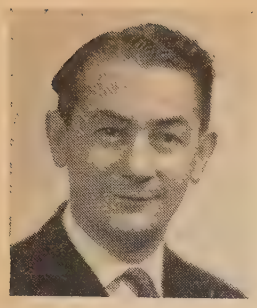
PERHAPS the least conspicuous but most important fact about the Bolshoi's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* is that it is neither conceived nor choreographed along Western balletic lines. Leonid Lavrosky has chosen to approach the famous tale from a Renaissance point of view, a completely valid one considering that the play is also a morality play. Shakespeare was concerned not only with the tale of the two lovers but also with the futility of civil war and the eternal feud between those two camps of misunderstanding, age and youth.

The play itself is full of realities, realities in keeping with the spirit of the times. The Renaissance Italians were realists and so were the Elizabethan English. Over the period of centuries, and particularly the Victorian era, actors and producers have slowly changed the tone of *Romeo and Juliet* to stress only the romantic scenes of the play and only the tragedy of the lovers themselves. The two other problems the play deals with, and derives much of its strength from, have been relegated to brief details in the background. Indeed, in recent years, barely touched upon. I remember in particular, upon leaving the theatre after a recent Old Vic dramatic production of *Romeo and Juliet*, remarking to myself, "Such polite death." It is then primarily a 19th century interpretation that we are used to. Against this memory and taste—for we have a tendency to feel most comfortable in that atmosphere with which we are most acquainted—we must examine the Bolshoi *Romeo and Juliet*.

I would hazard a guess that it takes a minimum of three viewings to overcome the "foreignness" of conception. Once done, whole vistas of theatrical experience open up.

The curtain rises not on a romantic, ephemeral Verona but on a dirty, ponderous city whose inhabitants reek of everyday living—as hazardous as it is vital. From the first bird-notes of daybreak, the filling of the streets, the ceremonious ballroom dances, through the massive building of the teeming duelling scenes—everywhere the formality, progression and stylisation of a tapestry are evident. Lavrovsky has utilised time as both focus and pallette. Firstly, not as a picture—with determined focus, but as a progressive focus moving slowly from left to right across the face of the tapestry—first by segments then by detail. Secondly, time used as a coloured light to illuminate each member of the families, their servants, their households' behaviour. There is time to show you the face of Verona as well as its people. One of the most opulent things about the Russians' production is the opulence of time itself.

Part of this marvel of time is the miracle of Galina Ulanova's portrait of Juliet. We see her first as the elfin, mischievous adolescent who does not want to dress for the ball. Later, in the ballroom, she is a pert miss, flattered by Paris's attentions, but it is the moment of Romeo's meeting in which we sense the first real change. During the brief love scene at the ball the crystallisation has begun. The childishness is gone. As the guests leave, Juliet catches sight of Romeo. She prods her nurse. We can almost *hear* the dialogue. Finally the old woman goes to ask a kinsman of Juliet. She leaves grumbling cheerfully, but she returns a moment later grave, silent, almost sullen. Juliet asks her the stranger's name. The nurse turns away avoiding her gaze. Juliet orders her to speak. The nurse tells her he is Romeo, son of her father's arch foe. Involuntarily, Juliet catches her breath. It is then that we see the first glimmer of Juliet, the woman, as wrapping herself in her shawl, she resolutely turns towards the door for one last sight of Romeo. The nurse averts her head: the die is cast. The detail is fleeting and simultaneous with the departure of the guests, but it is a perfect example of the extent of Ulanova's art and of Lavrovsky's tapestry. There are other moments—so many that they are difficult to set on paper. The way Ulanova stands at the window after Romeo has left her, as if by relaxing her body, by making it one with the stone, she could will her mind, her soul, even her being once again into his arms, away with him through the haze of morning. Again, after Paris has left, she touches her wedding gown lying on the chair, touches it out of curiosity and on contact draws back from it with loathing, realising perhaps for the first time that it represents the physical union which she must endure with someone else. At this moment the ugly realities of her impending marriage crystallise. It is a different Juliet we see with Friar Lawrence. A more forceful one. She is maturing and thinking as well, as she asks him, ironically, what is the difference between a dagger and poison? Again we see flashes of Renaissance worldliness, an awareness of the grim politics in the world about them, for



REPORT FROM

Tokyo —BY JOHN HAYLOCK

The Komaki Ballet Company, after the recent showing of their considerable talent in classical ballet, presented a ballet-concert of modern ballets on April 9th. The five ballets were produced by two of the company's leading ballerinas, Miss Ayako Ogawa and Miss Tomoji Shakuta, who also arranged the choreography. The music was provided by a tape-recorder, hence the name ballet-concert. The ballets were abstract and gave an opportunity for the dancers to show their ability, but as ballets they were not very satisfactory.

The first ballet, *The Rib of Eve* (choreography by Miss Shakuta and music by Poulenc), was about a woman (Miss Ogawa) who admires herself in a looking-glass and then, at a party, leaves her husband (Masao Kimura). There were five danseurs and five danseuses apart from the husband and wife in this ballet and they appeared at the party, which seemed more like a rehearsal turned into an improvised ballet; the dancers displayed their skill which one admired, but there was little coherence and no drama. Naoto Seki, the premier danseur, danced in a grand pas classique (choreography by Miss Ogawa and music by Auber) with Kazuyo Ishigaki and they were both excellent, especially Mr. Seki's entrechats which were superb. Ayako Ogawa in *Summer Time* (choreography by Miss Shakuta and music by Gershwin) had little to do but sit on a chair and posture, and look as if she were doing her morning exercises. Pleasant enough to see, but morning exercises are perhaps better done in private. By far the best of the ballets was *Symphonic Variations* (Choreography by Miss Ogawa and music by Franck). This ballet had been done before by the company, and they showed a confidence and a professional air that was refreshing after the vagueness of *The Rib of Eve*. The pas de six at the beginning was spirited and precise, and Yasuki Sasa (who shone in the recent production of *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*) was graceful and expert in his pas seul. The company seemed more at home in this ballet and they obviously enjoyed themselves, perhaps because of the more conventional music which fitted Miss Ogawa's simple but invigorating choreography excellently. *The Gamble* (choreography by Miss Ogawa and Miss Shakuta and music by Banfield) had a good idea but it lost itself towards the end and was untidy. It was supposed to represent the love-contest between a man and a woman. The man is playing cards with the woman and then a fierce quarrel begins between Diamonds and Spades which ends in the King of Spades, who has fallen for the woman, being killed by the King of Diamonds and the woman's mocking laughter at his death.

Abstract ballets are difficult to perform convincingly. While *The Gamble*, mostly because it had a shadow of a story, was better than *The Rib of Eve* which was meaningless, the company was clearly happier in something less weird like *Symphonic Variations*.

It was Ayako Ogawa's last performance here as she has now left for England with her British husband Dr. Ivan Morris who is an authority on Japan and the Japanese language and a well-known translator of Japanese literature. The Komaki Company and Tokyo ballet audiences will miss her greatly as she is a very gifted dancer, an interesting choreographer and a good teacher of ballet.

THE BOLSHOI IN NEW YORK—*Continued from page 19*

Juliet hesitates before taking the potion, not quite sure of the Friar's motives. Has the Friar told her the truth or is this an easy way out for him from a situation that could mean his imprisonment? Here, in particular, we see the difference between this and a 19th century production. Post-Victorian Juliets seldom gave more than a passing nod to the lines suggesting that a man of God could be capable of duplicity. The Renaissance, however, was a trifle more sophisticated. Ulanova's Juliet is now fully a woman. The gamble is great, and great may be the cost, but if won, life still has its meaning, hence the gamble is worth the odds. The woman Juliet has enough resolve to take those odds. Ulanova's approach to the death scene is yet another example of the most extraordinary detail . . . constantly building.

Taking the dead Romeo's head in her hands she kisses his lips as if the act could wake him. Startled by the bitterness of his lips she draws back, realises it is poison and he is truly dead. She kisses him again to take her death from his lips but none is to be found there. She seeks the vial but it is empty. With what fury she hurls it from her, this poison that would take her husband and deny herself. The impetus of her acting alone carries us through the remaining moments. Lavrovsky has chosen to finish his tale on a note of unifying grief. A perspective somewhat reminiscent of Uccello but once again with the formality and stylisation of a tapestry.

Yuri Zhdanov as Romeo is not quite as successful as Ulanova in creating the impression of youth. However, his Romeo is gentle and sincere. As a partner, he is, perhaps, without peer. He is heavier than we might suppose Romeo to be but he dances with grace and suppleness which belie his weight. As an actor he is capable of extraordinary power and his scenes with Juliet are always moving.

Excellent supporting performances were given by Yaroslav Sekh as a sardonic Mercutio; Konstantin Rikhter as a ferocious Tybalt; Alexander Radunsky as Capulet and Elena Iliushchenko as Lady Capulet. Particular mention must be made of the fine dancing by Marina Kondratyeva as Juliet's Girl Friend and Boris Khokhlov as the Troubadour. As for conductor Yuri Faier, he is superb.

Although the Bolshoi *Swan Lake* is a ballet with which we are familiar (if not this particular production) we are once again treated to a complete re-studying of the work. The Russians appear to approach everything with a great fondness for detail, giving over many minutes of stage action to make credible the smallest episode in behaviour.

In the Bolshoi version we are offered a production that has little in common with those we have seen before. Alexander Gorsky and Asaf Messerer almost completely reworked the Ivanov-Petipa original and have given us a completely different first act and a happy ending for the fourth act. While I find the latter rather difficult to accept, it does give Vladimir Levashev, in the role of Rothbart, a superb moment as the owl-sorcerer meets his death.

The first act brings us a pleasant image of the Prince, his friends, the tutor, and a delightful character in the form of the jester who ties together most of the action. The tutor, who is generally treated as a senile old fool in his cups, is here seen as a man in his late fifties or early sixties, sound of mind and body and quite the cavalier, if given the chance. He is treated with respect and his corpulence is wit only for the jester. Alexander Radunsky makes him thoroughly agreeable company for any prince. As for the jester, danced on this occasion by Georgi Soloviev, he is a thoroughly delightful character to whom a great deal of the best dancing in *Swan Lake* has been entrusted. This reviewer was particularly impressed by his clean lines, finished positions and fine control. Soloviev is so good, as a matter of fact, that he clearly overbalances the excellent pas de trois, danced by Lyudmila Bogomolova, Marina Kondratyeva and Lev Evdokimov, and at moments even obliterates the Prince. However engaging the first act dancers are, the big excitement is yet to come, for in Maia Plisetskaya we are in contact with a theatre personality of the first magnitude and a technician par excellence, a rare combination. London audiences have seen the Bolshoi *Swan Lake*, therefore I shall not dwell on details of the production itself.

Since this is the first time Plisetskaya is reported to have been outside the Soviet Union, her interpretation of Odette-Odile is one with which Western audiences are unfamiliar. She chooses to define sharply the personalities of each character. Her Odette is cool, introvert, and lyrical, warming somewhat timidly to Prince Siegfried's advances. Even within the framework of the second act itself, Plisetskaya illuminates a secondary problem which most ballerinas have a

—Continued at the foot of next page

REPORT FROM

Paris

—By FERDINAND REYNA

MR. ANDRÉ MALRAUX, Minister of Culture in the de Gaulle Government has just decreed some far-reaching reforms in the structure and functioning of the French theatres. In short, Mr. Claude Bréhart de Boisanger, a diplomat, is to direct the Comédie Française with Michel Saint Denis as artistic adviser. The Odéon theatre which up to now has worked in conjunction with the Comédie Française, becomes the Théâtre de France directed by Jean-Louis Barrault. Mr. Jean Vilar, creator and director of the Théâtre National Populaire, will have another theatre at his disposal which will try out works. Another trial-theatre will be entrusted to the dramatic author Albert Camus.

These are the decisions taken for the Théâtre Lyrique et Chorégraphique: Mr. A. M. Julien, creator of the Théâtre des Nations, becomes the Administrator of the combined Théâtres Lyriques Nationaux: the Opéra and the Opéra Comique in the first place. Mr. Gabriel Dussurget, organiser of the Festival at Aix-en-Provence, will be the artistic adviser. Mr. E. Bondeville will be the director of music at the two theatres. Mr. André Lamy, the producer, will direct the Opéra Comique which will become also a trial theatre for lyric and choreographic works. As regards the ballet, Roland Petit has been approached and called in to fill the post of "dance adviser" at the Opéra and the Opéra Comique. Last minute information is that he will be granted wider power and will be known as director general of the dance.

At the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, for five performances only, Maurice Béjart succeeded in gaining the interest of the public who were at first restive and ended up by being captivated by the strength and originality of *Orphée*, which is without doubt the strongest of the Béjart ballets at the present time. This ballet has also been presented in England at the Sixth Devon Festival. *La Mer* is a moving ballet full of humour for two characters. A young man of Marseilles loves a girl who in her turn does not love the sea. They meet, fall in love but at the end he goes off to sea alone. There is a monologue in this ballet which Béjart speaks very well. Maria Fris dances the part of the girl with an irresistible humour and veiled melancholy. *Pulcinella*, a ballet originally set to the Stravinsky score, was presented in Paris to the music of the Quatre Saisons by Vivaldi which were made rather heavy, thus depriving them of their vivacity and spirit. This Béjart season in Paris was a very short one but a very significant one full of promise after the astounding *Orphée*.

After Monte Carlo, Paris has just seen the Polish ballet from the Warsaw Opera, at the Théâtre des Nations, where they presented the ballet *Mazepa*, a work in six scenes by Irene Turska based on a tragedy by Julius Slovacki, with music by the composer Tadensz Szeligowski, choreography by Stanislas Miszczyk, decors and costumes by Lech and Michelle Zahorsky. In spite of the presence of two interesting young dancers: Olga Sawicka who studied in Paris under Mme. Igorova (and appeared briefly in the Miskovitch company) and Stanislav Szymanski who possesses excellent qualities there was nothing of interest in this interminable story in six scenes which went on the whole evening. The choreography was monotonous, the music cold, and the costumes without taste. At the première, the audience left the theatre before the end.

The ballet of the Cossacks of the Ukraine had a tremendous success at the Alhambra where they packed out the theatre for almost two months. It was a deserved success and makes this group rivals of the Igor Moiseiev company. There was nothing forced in their danced scenes: everything links up without the least desire to teach you anything but only aiming to divert and win your enthusiasm.

Jean Babilée, after his lack of success as a dramatic artist at the Théâtre de l'Athenée in the "Descent of Orpheus" by Tennessee Williams, due to his faulty diction, has said he will re-form his company in July and will leave for South America returning in time for the Edinburgh Festival.

José Torres, the well-known Spanish dancer, gave a series of performances with his company at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. His programme which consisted of three ballets, *La Fin de Don Juan*, *La Leçon de Danse Espagnole* and *Le Torero et la Gloire* was without taste as regards the costumes and without distinction where the dancing was concerned. It was like being in the music-hall of some remote district. This was a pity, because the company included Lolita Parent, star dancer at the Grand Theatre of Bordeaux, who dances very well and Marianne Ivanof, wife of José Torres, whom we saw as an adolescent at the Opéra and who was estranged from that theatre by the events of the Liberation. Marianne Ivanof still dances well and deserved better roles than those entrusted to her by her husband.

José Greco and his Spanish ballet have not visited Paris since 1949. Starting in May, he will make an important tour of Europe and will begin with a series of performances in Paris which are to be given at the Palais de Chaillot from May 10th to the 28th inclusive.

THE BOLSHOI IN NEW YORK—*Continued from page 20*

tendency to blur, that is: how much of the time in Act II is Odette a woman and how much of the time is she a swan? Plisetskaya makes this subtle, yet very important difference, completely clear. Her transformations from Swan to woman and back at the opening and closing of the act are extraordinary moments in dance theatre. The plasticity and lyricism of her arms are music in themselves. Her Odile is a crystal—a black, glowing diamond. Hard, venomous, attractive—she overpowers the Prince. There may be criticism that her Odile is *so* different that the Prince could *never* mistake the two. This may be true, but is not this very flaw inherent in the libretto? Certainly, this reviewer felt that excitement at last, so missing for too long a time. Technically, Plisetskaya is superb. Though she elects to replace the 32 fouettés with piqués, enchainés and pirouettes, they are done so brilliantly and with such speed that I for one never missed the fouettés. A mention in passing of Plisetskaya's arabesques, attitudes and stunning elevation. Is it possible to have so many things in a ballerina? The answer is obvious—yes. The only drawback to be found with an otherwise beautiful *Swan Lake* was conductor Gennadi Rozhdestvensky who retarded the middle and end of Act II to a virtual stop and otherwise contributed occasional erratic tempi. The third act contributes a high-spirited Spanish Dance by Susanna Zvyagina, Irina Chub, Yaroslav Sekh and German Sitikov, and a well danced classical variation by Nicolai Fadeyechev as the Prince. A word or two should be said in closing about Fadeyechev. He is a remarkable partner; modest, intelligent, and gentle. His dancing, while not flashy is virile and effortless; altogether we find him a very pleasing stage personality.

The second interpreter of Odette-Odile was Nina Timofeyeva with Boris Khokhlov as the Prince and Yuri Zakharov in the role of the evil Sorcerer. Timofeyeva possesses a style less foreign to us. We have seen her type on stage before both here and across the continent. She has a fine line, soft port de bras and is darkly attractive, slightly reminiscent of Violetta Elvin, although she is taller. While neither musical nor lyrical she manages to convey tenderness and warmth. While her theatre personality is not particularly electric she does have a feminine charm which makes her Odette-Odile sympathetic. Her Odette is a gentle, bewitched maiden if never at any time a swan. Here her love scenes with the Prince have a winning sincerity. Odile is less successful. Technically she is strong but not exciting although she elects to do the 32 fouettés and executes them with no difficulty. Her Odile is still a prototype and a character without any subjective meaning.

One fault I find with Timofeyeva's movement is that it does not "flow" from foot to fingertips, nor is there any of that lightness so necessary to Act II.

Boris Khoklov is one of the classical dancers of the company whose positions are somewhat cleaner on the whole. He has good *batterie* and a better than average elevation. While he is not a partner of either Zhdanov or Fadeyechev quality, he is far above Western standards and complements Timofeyeva very well.

Georgi Farmanyants while not as brilliant as Soloviev nevertheless dances the jester with verve and brio. The pas de trois of Act I was danced charmingly by Nina Fedorova, Nina Chistova and Albert Trushkin.

It is indeed remarkable how well Gennadi Rozhdstvensky conducted for his wife.

Chicago

—By GEORGE JACKSON

MODERN DANCE

Probably the worst thing that can be said about a "modern dancer" is that he is old fashioned and this is exactly what the critics of Central Europe and North America have been saying about each other's leading artists. The controversy is of some interest since these two areas of the world are the undeniable centers of modern dance.

Since the end of World War II there has been little international exchange of modern dancers compared to ballet. But the most famous (Wiesenthal, Kreutzberg, Chladek Hoyer and Wigman from Austria and Germany; Graham, Limon and Humphrey from North America) have taught, had their works performed or have themselves performed on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Perhaps the reason these artists have been called old fashioned in each other's realms is that the most famous are usually also the oldest.

I think there is an additional reason. More than ballet, modern dance attempts to reflect (or deflect) the emotional current of its social environment. This current has changed in opposite directions in North America and Central Europe. North American society has become more organised since the end of the last war and the ethic of individualism has been replaced by the ethos of organisation man. Although there is probably no more personal freedom or individualism in West Germany and Austria today than in North America, the class structure of most European countries has become less rigid in the last twenty years. So it is not the absolute degree of social organisation but opposite shifts in the collateral emotional currents which help to explain why modern dancers from abroad are often accused of being old fashioned.

INGE WEISS

What happens when a modern dancer tries to draw inspiration from these opposite currents? Chicago saw such an artist on March 14 in a solo programme at the Goodman Theatre. Inge Weiss is a handsome young woman: tall, thin, with large feet, clean, strong features and blond hair which she wears long and loose or winds tightly back from her high forehead. For the last three years she has taught, studied and performed in the United States; previously she was leading dancer of Mary Wigman's troupe in Germany. Her tireless technique shows that she has had thorough training in ballet, modern and folk dance. The actual movements in her solos are as carefully chosen and tastefully combined from these three sources as are the cuts of her costumes and the colours of her stage lighting from Bauhaus or Institute of Design catalogues or her music from the piano works of Bach, Smetana, Scriabin, Bartok, etc. Yet the effect of all this careful good taste is static because it reflects and deflects the opposite currents of Germany and the United States. If any given movement conveys an inherent character, be it the quick American arabesque which funnels the dancer's personality into a correct pose or the powerful German turn which proceeds from uniform order to chaos, Inge Weiss repeats the movement with a slight variation which immediately kills this trait. The art of this dancer is cool, cooler than international jazz but like the jazz it is uncompromisingly human for it lacks the animal heat which is part of national style. Inge Weiss' almost conscious neutralisation of emotion is fascinating in retrospect; watching it was like concentrating on a void.

MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Prior to the present decade, ballet choreographers were often indebted to the innovations of modern dance. Recently the reverse has occurred, making questionable the claim that modern dance necessarily reflects and deflects society's emotional currents to a greater extent than ballet. This was particularly evident in five pieces by Merce Cunningham which his troupe danced at the Goodman Theatre on April 13. Indeed I doubt if non-ballet dancers could perform Cunningham's choreography. Practically all the steps could be described by the classical vocabulary and the very quality of the movements was that of contemporary neo-classical ballet; even toe shoes would not have been out of place on such a superb technician as Carolyn Brown.

If Cunningham's choreography differs from most ballet it is because the components of the performance are disengaged. Although the dancing is more or less simultaneous with the music, it is otherwise independent of it; sometimes several performers appear on stage simultaneously, dancing parts which are not only unrelated in their actual steps but also in their emotional quality. It is impossible to give unity of form or feeling to such choreography, consequently Cunningham relies heavily on leitmotifs. Unfortunately these are seldom developed (would development be contrary to the idea of disengagement?); they are merely repeated or accumulated, reminding one of the very mannered ballets of Serge Lifar, whose choreography also attempts to disengage itself from the music and the other components of a performance. The music simultaneous with Cunningham's works was by Erik Satie, Earl Brown, Christian Wolff and most effectively by John Cage who composes sounds and silences for the "prepared" (i.e. tampered with) piano.

DORIS HUMPHREY DANCE GROUP

On April 25, Doris Humphrey's dancers gave a lecture-demonstration at the University of Chicago. The lecture was more appropriate for a primary school than for a university audience. An excerpt from the last work choreographed by the late Miss Humphrey (in collaboration with Ruth Currier to Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto* No. 4) again showed the dependence of contemporary modern dance on ballet. But most of the dancers in this group lacked the elegant precision and taut articulation demanded by Bach's music and the choreography. There were also excerpts from John Wilson's *Diary of a Fly*, Valerie Bettis' *No Exit* (based on Sartre's play with string quartet music by Anton von Webern), and two other Doris Humphrey works, *The Shakers* and *The Life of the Bee* (based on Maeterlinck with music by Hindemith, in which Joyce Trisler was outstanding as the old queen). These older Humphrey pieces, created before the present era of conformity, were far from the world of ballet. Perhaps they are "old fashioned", but it is a good old fashion which survives as a powerful form of art.

Munich

—By DR. WILFRIED HOFMANN

Since Alan Carter first announced it was his intention to leave Munich speculations were under way about his future position and his prospective successor. Both questions seem to have found an answer simultaneously. Carter has agreed to head the Amsterdam Ballet Company in Holland which under his direction will be newly formed in September from the present Amsterdam Opera Ballet and the Lage Landen Ballet Company, and which will be run independently of the opera management.

At the same time Heinz Rosen has emerged as the most promising candidate for the Munich post. In spite of his successes with *La Légende de Joseph* and *La Dame à la Licorne* it was a unique decision for Munich to entrust him with the production of parts I and II of Carl Orff's *Trionfi* (*Carmina Burana* and *Cartulli Carmina*). He scored such unusual appraisal that it now seems entirely his choice if he wants to become artistic director of the Munich ballet company.

Under Rosen's production these operas have been moulded into that rare species of ballet-opera where neither singing nor dancing play a prominent part, and where neither one could be cut down without fatally hurting the cast as a whole. How seldom is this complete integration of both arts achieved in praxi! Of course, we have Jean-George Noverre's amazingly optimistic views on ballet in the opera as laid down in the 8th letter of the 1760 edition of his "Lettres." But normally the outcome is so very different: the singers fail to obey the slightest choreographic scheme, and the dancers do their best to ridicule their colleagues through that normal clash of conflicting means and styles. There are three ways out of the dilemma: (1) Either singers are altogether banished from stage (or only used as static elements). This Rosen did in *Catulli Carmina*, where Natascha Trofimova and Heino Hallhuber perform the main parts. (2) Or singers are trained as dancers. This solution—approached in American musicals—seems unachievable for European opera standards. (3) Singers and dancers be produced in a way that they are permanently—not consecutively—interchanged. This Rosen did with *Carmina Burana*. Here he merged both elements through organising the choirs into a corps de ballet assigned to do simple but detailed movements, overcoming the tradition of assembling monumental mass choirs. Through clever lighting Rosen replaces almost unnoticeably those choirs with the real corps de ballet this way giving us the illusion that singers were dancing and dancers singing. Of course the dancers are employed in a way which is solely functional, and never allowed to shine technically. Both Helmut Jürgen's decors and Sophie Schröck's costumes are balletic, and flattering in the Cour d'amour scene. It is, however, inexcusable that Inge Bertl was made to appear with transparent white tights, and with nothing beneath. This same offence led to Nijinsky's dismissal from St. Petersburg.

Leonide Massine (plus junior!) gave his well known lecture demonstration on North-American Indian dances (Amerika-Haus). Mr. Massine received all the acclamation of the grandseignior of ballet. Also William Milié, formerly with the American Festival Ballet, presently at the Cora Montez Studio in Munich is teaching jazz technique after Katherine Dunham. He will give a lecture demonstration on May 23rd.

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New Books

And Promenade Home. By Agnes de Mille. (*Hamish Hamilton*, 25*s.*)

If I had to name five of the foremost books on ballet I would certainly include Agnes de Mille's first book, *Dance to the Piper*. It is the *Theatre Street* of the New World and though the latter was written from the aloof and glorious heights of Imperial Russia, whereas the former surveys the scene from the rocky and rather raddled promontory of modern America, the heart of the dancer beats strongly in each and to the same rhythm.

The sequel does not belong to the same category. Not that Miss de Mille's pen has lost any of its pungency and wit, or her eye its penetration, but the subject matter in which ballet and its personalities play but a minor role lacks that rich and rewarding variety that was so fascinating in the other.

The story of her childhood and training and the undaunted but heartbreaking struggles that followed, ended in the triumphs of *Rodeo* and *Fall River Legend*. The sequel brings her wartime marriage and fame. With *Oklahoma*, *Brigadoon*, *Carousel* and other Broadway successes, she launches a new style in musicals in which dancing becomes all important. But the world of Show Biz is brash and noisy and its setting in the rather sickly emotionalism and hysteria of the United States during the shooting war tend to emphasize an intensity that becomes monotonous. One turns with relief, as does the author, to the quiet, ready dancers, the humble, hardworking dancers and in passages like the following she comes back into her own:

"In ballet class, standing in an anonymous line, I was free from responsibility for one hour and a half, free to work through the gall of spirit, to feel once more the breath of revival and promise come into my heart, moving from the floor under my feet. Stretching about me was the beloved floor, the classic empty floor. It waited for the blow, for the caress, answering the striking as a musical instrument answers the player. I put my hot and readied foot on the wood, and felt the power up my leg and my ready back. I felt with my toes and my strong instep and my heel that supported my spine and my lifted head —and from the heel I pushed. The floor pushed back and the instep held like a wing and I suspended in the air and my arms were released; and my throat and my back ached again with the good pain of supporting and my body was strong enough and held."

I know of no writer who can put more clearly into words the thoughts and feelings of the dancer; and no dancer who has fought more stubbornly and with such pioneer spirit for all she believes in.

Her pages on the age-old struggle of women to combine marriage with career, and the injustice whereby the choreographer, unlike other creative workers in the arts, enjoys no legal rights in his wares provide material for much thought.

Songs and Dances for the Stuart Masque. By Andres J. Sabol (*Brown University Press, Rhode Island, U.S.A.* $4.00).

Here is another of those excellent examples of scholarly research by universities and foundations for which America is always placing us in her debt. This book provides a means of recreating the songs, ranging from popular catches and ballad tunes to elaborate choruses and sophisticated ayres, of the Stuart Court Masque, and contains the bulk of the extant vocal music. Students of the dance will find a representative selection (some 25 items) of tunes from 1604–1641, a time when the masque reached the height of its development.

These masques were written for a special season or occasion, such as Christmas or a marriage. They were performed by distinguished amateurs who danced before their hosts and then invited the company to join in the revels, and it was from these entertainments, as given in France, that the first ballets were evolved.

Fully documented and annotated, there is an excellent introductory essay, while the transcriptions from early seventeenth century sources have been sufficiently modernized to make the collection both practical and usable. **PIGEON CROWLE**

Ballet School of the Bolshoi Theatre. (*Central Books*, 3*s.* 6*d.*)

This is the first book to come out of Russia about the Ballet School of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow and its joint authors are Yelena Bocharnikova, the school's principal, and Mikhail Gabovich, art director, who themselves graduated from the school in the twenties and after successful careers on the Bolshoi Theatre stage returned to the school to train new generations of ballet dancers.

The book does not go into detail about each special subject, nor is it a manual on classical ballet training. It was written to give the general public some appreciation of the work of the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet School and coming at a time when the performances of the Bolshoi Ballet itself have left people in many countries insatiable for information this should answer some of their questions, for one of the chapters is entitled "A Peep into History" and "Ballet School Graduates on the Stage." There are many photographs of the Bolshoi Ballet artists as well as of pupils at class in the school. **E.H.**

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Reviewed by . . . . BEDFORD CROWLE

SWAN LAKE

This excellent recording, Decca LXT5501–2, gives you the best of Petipa's version of *Swan Lake*, and orchestral playing of great clarity. It includes the whole of the second and third acts apart from the final scene from the former and the Drigo interpolations from the latter. The first act contains the pas de trois and usual set of variations, as well as the Waltz and Polonaise, while the fourth act is represented by the final scene. It is interpreted by Ansermet with his usual smooth elegance, and if this sometimes lacks dramatic expression, his dancing rhythms will recall many enchanted moments of this lovely ballet. For those who want a single sided momento, mainly Act 2, there is a satisfying rendering by Sawallisch, Columbia 33CX1623, with the well-known suite from *The Nutcracker* on the reverse side.

COPPELIA

I criticised Ansermet's fine complete recording of the ballet, LXT 5342–3 for a certain lack of sparkle, which gives a slight tendency to monotony, even though the individual items are finely conceived. Now Dorati and the Minneapolis S.O., Mercury MMA11000–1, take the bull by the horns (or Franz by the ear) with the result that there is never a dull moment. Inclined to be overdone at times—the timpani is probably the fault of the recording technicians—but all in all it gives a very vivid picture of this gay light hearted ballet and its taking score. These two conductors approach the music from very different angles—perhaps midway is the ideal.

ROMEO AND JULIET

This much played *Fantasy Overture* of Tchaikovsky's has attracted one choreographer after another. The most recent is Briansky of the Festival Ballet who set it most successfully as a pas de deux for Krassovska and himself. To the fifteen renderings on disc, Sir John Barbirolli now adds his Pye CCL30128. Not all will approve his heartfelt approach but his numerous followers will seize it with both hands including as it does Mendelssohn's *The Hebrides* and Wagner's Overture to *Die Meistersinger*.

FANCY FREE

I am glad to see Robbins' ballet, Capitol P8196, back in the catalogue—Bernstein's score conjures up the whole idea admirably. It is coupled with the same excerpts from de Mille's *Rodeo* as Mercury MMA11005—see last month's *Ballet Today*—giving one some variation in choice. Ballet Theatre's conductor, Levine, is no match for Dorati but nevertheless this is a well recorded and thoroughly enjoyable disc.

PASSIONS

It was to the first movement of Franck's *Symphony* that Lifar set his ballet, *Passions*—originally for his 1947 venture and later for the Paris Opera. In the concert hall, more often than not, it seems a very long work but in the hands of a conductor of Giulini's calibre—young though he is—it is a thing of great beauty and interest, Columbia 33CX1589. He keeps the tempo going, yet has time for the more subtle details—in fact, he sees it as a whole. This is undoubtedly the finest interpretation I have heard on record. The fill-up, *Pysche and Eros*—also superbly conducted—is from this composer's entrancing symphonic poem, *Pysche*.

CONCERTO

Both used the same name for their ballets but Janine Charrat only choreographed the first two movements of Grieg's *Piano Concerto*, while Lambrinos used the whole score for his ballet for Festival Ballet Company. Gyorgi Cziffra's performance, HMV. ALP1678 is one to be reckoned with and this applies equally to the coupling, Liszt's *Second Piano Concerto*. Although its brilliance is quite amazing, the romantic qualities have not been sacrificed and his singing tone is a delight. Unfortunately the recording of the climaxes, particularly at the end of the Grieg, are not always clear and crisp which is a little disturbing.

FOLK DANCES

Swiss Mountain Music, Columbia 33SX1136, is an attractive disc from the "Music of the World" series. It has more variety than is often found in the folk world. There are polkas and landler by the Jura Orchestra, the Berner Landler-Quintet, etc. Also songs and yodelling, while Alois Lischer plays the Alpenhorn magnificently to the accompaniment of cow bells—I should say it was just the disc for those home from a Swiss holiday.

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PROGRAMMES FOR THE MONTH

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

30th May	Sat.	(mat)	*Les Rendezvous, Danses Concertantes, Sleeping Beauty Act III*
2nd June	Tues.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
5th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*The Shadow* (Beriosova, Chatfield), *Symphonic Variations* (Fonteyn, Somes), *Daphnis and Chloe* (Fonteyn, Somes)
6th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Les Sylphides* (Beriosova, Chatfield), *Firebird* (Nerina, Somes), *The Lady and the Fool* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
6th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
10th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)
11th ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*The Shadow* (Beriosova, Chatfield), *Symphonic Variations* (Fonteyn, Somes), *Daphnis and Chloe* (Fonteyn, Somes)
13th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Danses Concertantes* (Wells, Doyle), *Giselle* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
13th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Rendezvous* (Nerina, Shaw), *Symphonic Variations* (Fonteyn, Somes), *Daphnis and Chloe* (Fonteyn, Somes)
15th ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*The Lady and the Fool* (Beriosova, Chatfield), *Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
20th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
20th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)

. . . **END OF BALLET SEASON** . . .

THE ROYAL BALLET ON TOUR

W/c 25th May	*Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham (2 weeks)*
,, 8th June	*King's Theatre, Southsea*
,, 15th ,,	*Granada Theatre, Sutton*

FESTIVAL BALLET

26th May–8th June	*Italy—Genoa, Turin*
11th June–14th June	*Stadt Theatre (Zurich Festival)*
16th June–18th June	*Lausanne Festival*
20th June	*Vichy Festival*
W/c 22nd June	*Pavilion Theatre, Bournemouth*
,, 29th ,,	*New Theatre Oxford*

London Season at the Royal Festival Hall, July 14th–12th September. (*Booking Opens 1st June*)

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Leaflet with programme details from Hall and Agents.

BALLET RAMBERT SADLER'S WELLS SEASON

25th May	Mon.	(eve)	*Giselle, Hazana*
26th ,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Giselle, Hazana*
27th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Laiderette, Simple Symphony, Two Brothers, Gala Performance*
28th ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Laiderette, Simple Symphony, Two Brothers, Gala Performance*
29th ,,	Fri.		*Coppelia*
30th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Coppelia*
30th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Lilac Garden, Judgment of Paris, Dark Elegies, Gala Performance*
1st June	Mon.	(eve)	*Laiderette, La Reja, Hazana, Czernyana*
2nd ,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Coppelia*
3rd ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Variations on a Theme, La Reja, Hazana, Czernyana*
4th ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Variations on a Theme, La Reja, Two Brothers, Les Sylphides*
5th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Lilac Garden, Judgment of Paris, Dark Elegies, Gala Performance*
6th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Czernyana, Giselle*
6th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, Two Brothers, Czernyana, Hazana*

ON TOUR

W/c 8th June *Theatre Royal, Norwich.*
Visit to the U.S.A.
14th July for three weeks at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.
First week *Laiderette, Giselle*
Second week *Simple Symphony, Two Brothers, Death and the Maiden, Judgment of Paris, Gala performance.*
Third week *Coppelia*
2nd Aug. at the Arts Centre, Manchester, Vermont, one performance of *Giselle.*
3rd Aug. at the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont, one performance of *Giselle.*

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,, 1st June	*King's Theatre, Edinburgh.*
,, 8th ,,	*King's Theatre, Glasgow.*
,, 15th ,,	*Theatre Royal, Newcastle.*

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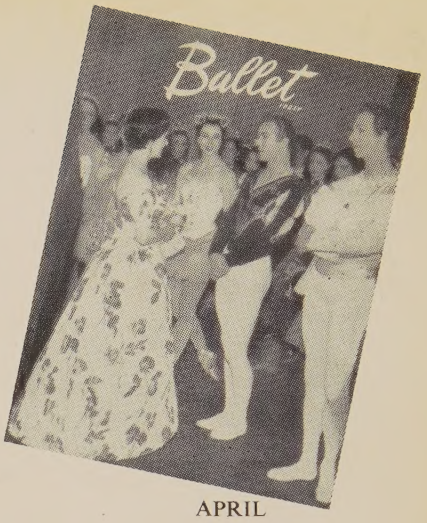

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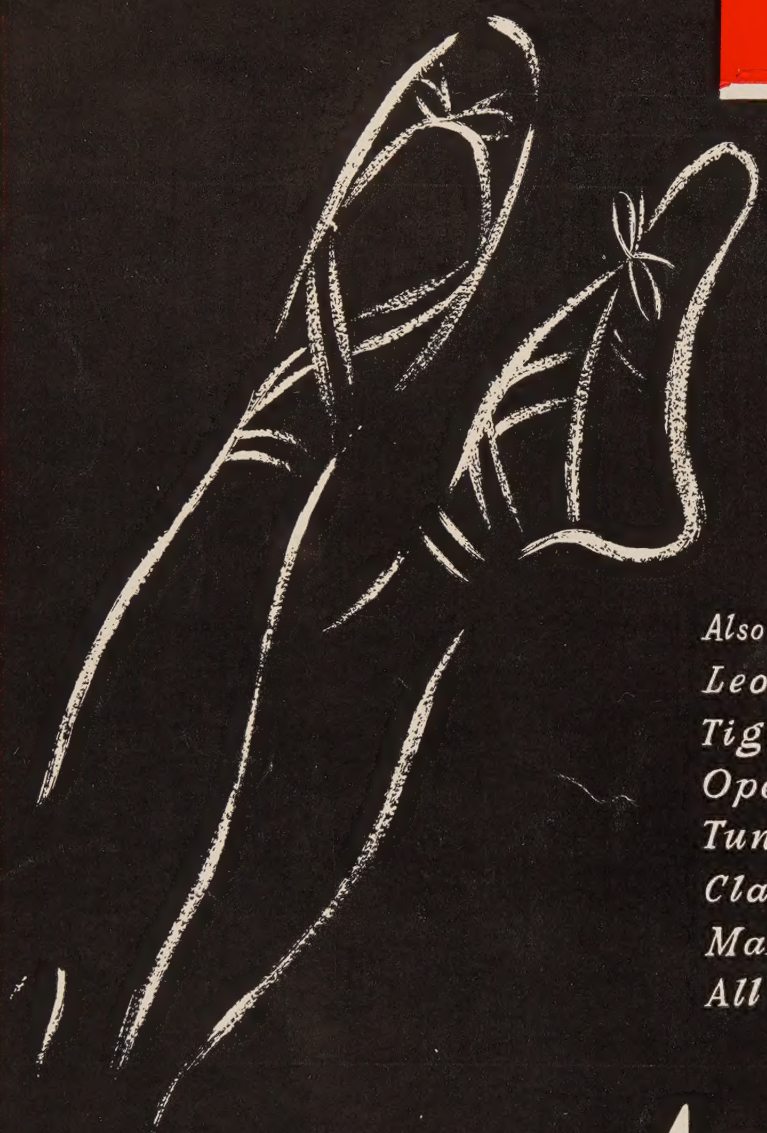

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